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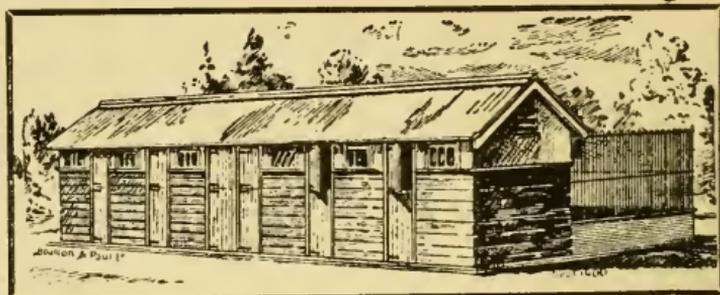
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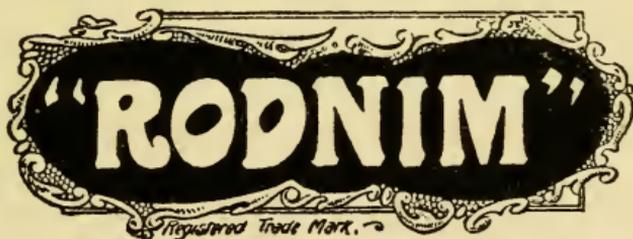
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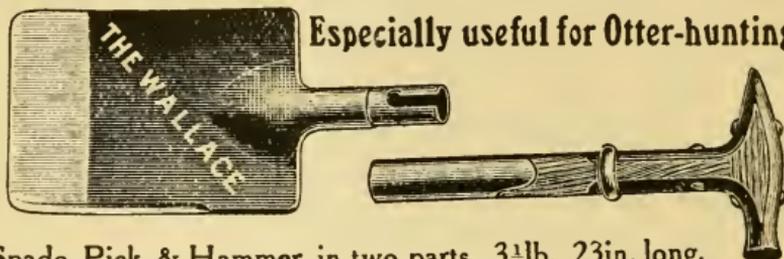
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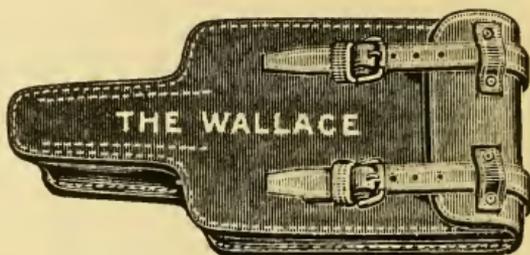
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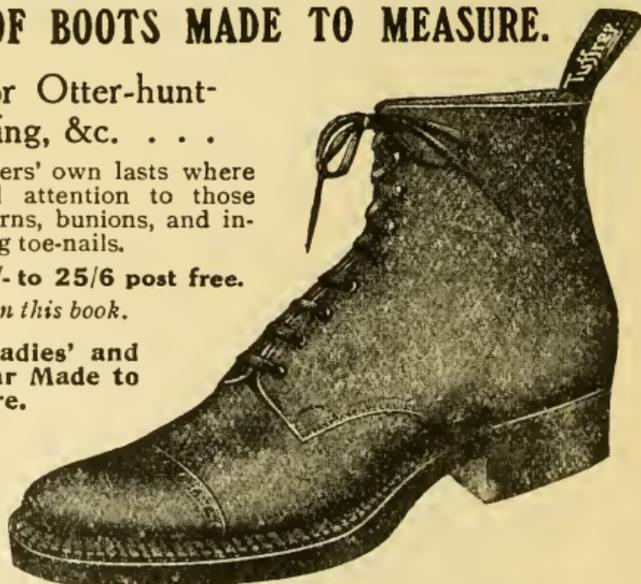
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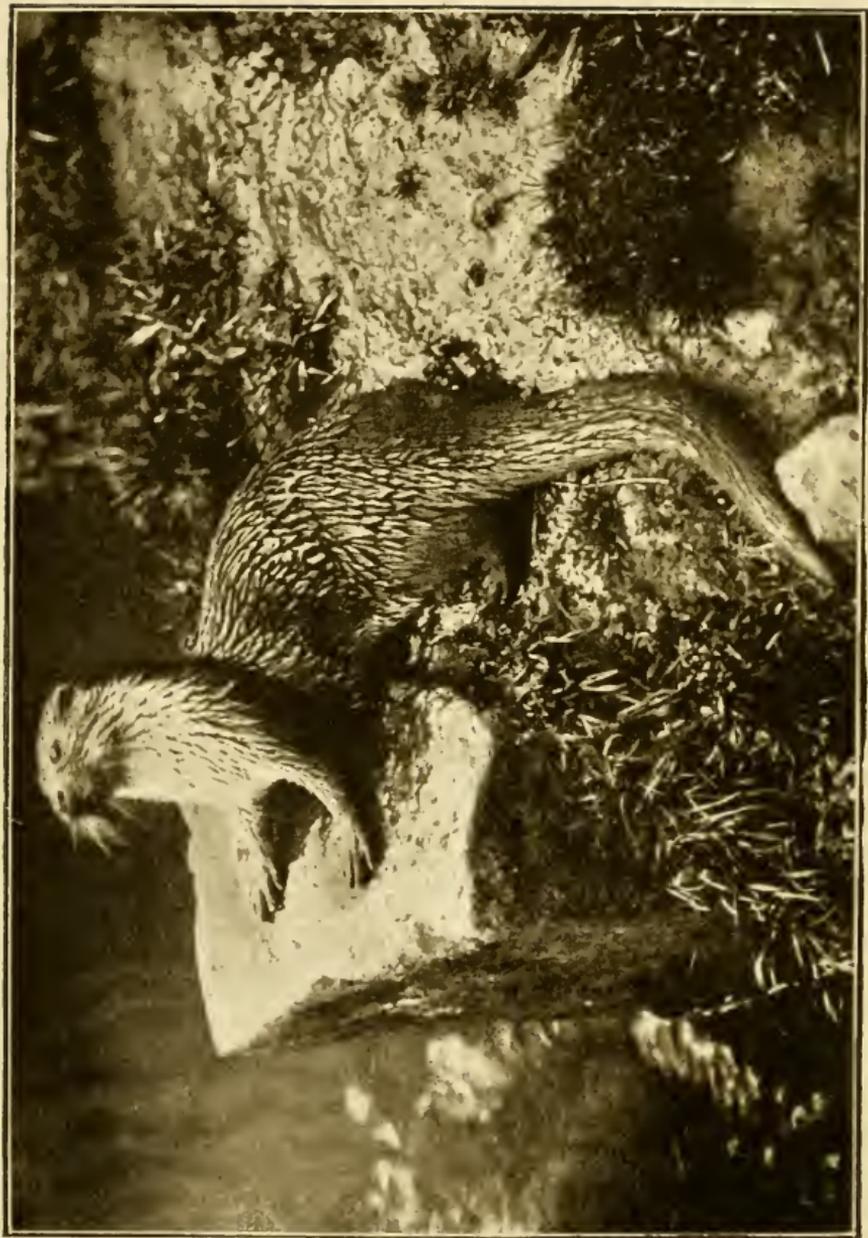
OTTERS AND OTTER-HUNTING

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Lutra vulgaris, photographed from life.

Otters and Otter-Hunting

Illustrated from Photographs, and with
a Map showing British Otter-hunts
and Kennels

By

L. C. R. CAMERON

*Author of "THE BOOK OF THE CARAVAN,"
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PREFACE.

CURIOSLY enough no book exclusively devoted to that fascinating beast the Otter, nor to the still more fascinating sport of hunting him with hounds, has hitherto been published in the English tongue. Two monographs have appeared, one in German and the other in French: but the first deals with its subject zoologically, and the second only as an enemy of pisciculture. For the rest, brief references are to be found, as regards the Otter in various works on natural history, and as regards the sport of Otter-hunting in sundry contributions to encyclopædic or periodical literature from the earliest to the most recent times; while there is a scarce, privately-printed "Diary," recording Mr. James Lomax's sport in the North and in Wales between 1829 and 1871.

Without presuming to instruct my seniors among Masters of Otter-hounds in the science and business of Otter-hunting, it has been my object to bring together in one volume, at a moderate price and within a small compass, the substance of all that has hitherto been well said of both sport and quarry; and to supplement this with such informa-

tion as a close and long study of the latter, and considerable experience of the former, in different countries and under varying conditions may have enabled me to acquire.

Thus, information as to the natural history of the Otter, his place in zoological classification, distribution, appearance, physical peculiarities, average size and weight, his habits and haunts in Great Britain and Ireland, has been supplemented by practical details as to the science of hunting the Otter in diverse "countries": from the rocky mountain streams of Wales, Devonshire, and the Highlands of Scotland, to the "sticky" rivers of South-Eastern England. Especial attention has been paid to the question of hounds and terriers for Otter-hunting, to the duties of the various hunt officials, and to the expense of keeping up a pack and hunting a country.

Since less is known of the habits of the Otter than of most other mammals in the fauna of these islands: and since in Otter-hunting the Field, well instructed, may take a more prominent and useful part than in any other form of the chase: I hope that this little volume may prove of equal interest to the naturalist and to the enthusiastic follower of the queen of summer sports—Otter-hunting.

L. C. R. CAMERON.

January, 1908.

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Otters and Otter-Hunting

CHAPTER I.

THE PLACE OF THE OTTER IN ZOOLOGY.

IN scientific classification the Otter—species, *Lutra vulgaris*—belongs to the genus *Lutra*, sub-family *Lutrinæ*, family *Mustelidæ*, section *Arctoidea*, sub-order *Carnivora vera* or *Fissipedia*, order *Carnivora*, sub-class *Monodelphia*, class *Mammalia*, phylum *Vertebrata* of the Animal Kingdom.

Lutra vulgaris, the Common Otter of the British Isles, has been given by zoologists the following Latin names: *Lutra vulgaris*, Erxleben, Desmar, Jenyns. *Lutra*, Ray. *Mustela Lutra* and *Viverra Lutra*, Linnæus. *Lutra Roensis*, Ogilby. It is *Lutra lutra* in the latest catalogue of the Zoological Society of London.

Buffon calls it *La Loutre*, and in German it is *die Fischotter*. The Celtic peoples had several

names for the Otter, which, taken together, are admirably descriptive of its various characteristics. In the Brythonic group of the Celtic languages, the words all mean "water-dog": Breton *dourgi* and (modern) *ki-dour*; Welsh, *dwrgi*; Cornish, *dofergi* (composed of *dofer*, an old form of *dour*, water, and *ci*, a dog), also written *devergi*, *dourgi*, *durg*, *dovergi*; but in modern Cornish, according to the system framed by Mr. Henry Jenner, F.S.A., in his "Handbook of the Cornish Language," it should be spelled *dowrgi*. The Gaelic group has also this word for the Otter: Irish, ṽṽṽṽ-ṽṽ, Scottish Gaelic *dobhar-chù*, a word which has now come to be employed for the Otter-hound. The most usual name for the Otter in the Gaelic-speaking parts of the Highlands is *dòbhran* (pronounced *dòran*), which may again mean "the water thing," or may refer to its quality of shyness, since *dòbhranach* is shy, distant; or on the other hand, *dòbhranach* (shy) may be derived from *dòbhran* and really mean Otter-like, retiring. Craigendoran in Argyllshire, so well known to travellers from Glasgow to the Western Highlands, is the anglicised spelling of *Creag an dòbhran*, "the rock of the Otters." *Cù-donn*, another Gaelic name for the Otter, means the brown dog, and *cù-dur* also the water-dog. *Béist-dubh*, the black beast, and *béist-donn*,

the brown beast, are only applied to the female Otter. In yet another Gaelic appellation for the Otter, *dòbhran-leaslan*, the literal meaning is "the full-thighed water-thing," which is admirably descriptive. *Dòbhar-chu* has also been taken to mean the dark or obscure dog, and is the name of the fabulous Otter—believed in, but never seen, by the Highlanders—whose skin can heal all diseases, its value being the amount of pure gold it will contain when sewn up to make a *sporan*, or purse.

The physical description of *Lutra vulgaris* is that of an animal whose head is broad and flat, the muzzle very broad, the upper lip thick and overhung, whiskers very thick and strong, tongue slightly rough, eyes one inch or so behind the nostrils, small, black, with prominent cornea, ears short and rounded, body long and low, legs short and loosely articulated, feet palmate, with five toes on each, furnished with strong and perfect interdigital webs, and with short claws somewhat turned up but not retractile, tail more than half as long as the head and body together, very broad and strong at the base, flattened horizontally, with two small glands secreting a fœtid liquid underneath, fur of two kinds, the shorter fine, soft, and whitish grey in colour, with brown tips, the longer stiffer and thicker, shining, greyish at base, bright rich

brown at the points, especially on the upper parts and on the outer surface of the legs, the throat, cheeks, breast, belly, and inner parts of legs brownish-grey throughout. Dentition: incisive teeth $\frac{6}{6}$, grinders $\frac{5}{5} : \frac{5}{5}$ or $\frac{5}{6} : \frac{5}{6}$; or more scientifically, according to Bell: Incisors $\frac{6}{6}$: canines $\frac{2}{2}$: false molars $\frac{6}{6}$: molars $\frac{4}{4} = \frac{18}{18} = 36$.

To the untrained eye of the unscientific observer, however, the Otter appears to present a type midway in size and other attributes between the water-vole (which he will call a water-rat), *Microtus amphibius*, and the beaver, *Castor fiber*. Really, of course, the Otter is a weasel.

In the matter of size and weight the average length (in feet) of the male Otter has been given as 3.8. Bell gives the average weight as ♂ 20 to 24lb., ♀ 16 to 20lb., which seems fairly correct. The "record" weight of a British Otter is that given by Daniel as having been taken in the River Lea between Hertford and Ware in October, 1794, which proved "upwards of 40lb." One was recorded in the *Field* of February 20th, 1886, weighing 36lb. The largest specimen I have personally examined is that in the collection of the Hon. A. Holland-Hibbert, at Munden, Herts, which weighed 32lb. with a "dry jacket." It was shot in the garden at Munden in 1876. On Wednesday, July 10th, 1907, the Essex O.H. killed

a magnificent dog Otter which weighed 34lb. on Salter's scales after a four hours' hunt. In vouching for this weight Mr. L. Rose, the Master, wrote me: "There are several very big Otters in the sea marshes. This one was lying almost on the sea wall," at Kirton Sluice, near Ipswich. It is undoubtedly the "record" for an Otter killed by hounds.

In practice, however, Otter-hunters are unlikely to see many Otters killed which exceed 30lb. in weight. In my own experience 29lb. with a wet jacket (Inverness-shire, 1903) and 26lb. with a dry jacket (Wiltshire, 1906) are the limits of size for a dog Otter; but I have no doubt that on the sea-coasts of the Western Highlands and Islands Otters exceeding 34lb. may still be found. Roughly speaking, anything over 20lb. for a dog or over 15lb. for a bitch Otter is a fair specimen.

The average age for an Otter is a more difficult question to settle. There is proof that one born in captivity has lived for more than ten years, and then met with an accidental death. I have killed and seen killed dog Otters that, judged by their general appearance and by the state of their teeth, compared with those of hounds and terriers—and making due allowance for the fact that Otters do not eat carrion, but are cleanly and clean-feeding animals, rarely, if ever, fed on sweetmeats—may

have been between seventeen and twenty years old. It is, of course, a matter of mere conjecture: as is Bell's statement that the female goes with young nine weeks.

We are on more certain ground when we come to discuss the number of cubs in a litter. Lydekker gives these as from "three to five," and I am inclined to think this is correct. I have never found more than five in a couch, though I have heard of six, but there is always the chance of this having been a case of two litters laid down by different bitches in the same holt. This may, of course, be the case when five are found, though, curiously enough, in the graphic if rather bloodthirsty account of an Otter-hunt in "The Compleat Angler," Izaak Walton makes the huntsman find "young ones, no less than five," in the kennel of the bitch Otter he had just killed. Three, when very small, is a common number to find; but when hunted it is rare to "put down" more than two cubs with the mother. What becomes of the third cub in these circumstances is a mystery as yet unsolved, seeing that the Otter in these realms has no natural enemy, and is subject to no known disease.

It was formerly supposed that Otters, like many other beasts, bred only in the spring of the year. The testimony of everyone who has studied the habits of the Otter for any length of time, how-

ever, is to the effect that young of a similar age have been found in every month of the year; and that, despite the ingenious theory advanced by the writer of the contribution on "The Otter and his Ways" in the Badminton volume on "Hunting," is now (and I think rightly) the accepted opinion. Personally I have seen cubs in Inverness-shire in August, in December, and in February, of the same size (and presumably of the same age) as cubs found in the New Forest in May and June. It has been held by some that more young Otters are produced in spring and early summer than during the rest of the year; but that may only be because during the hunting season there are greater opportunities of seeing them than in autumn and winter.

With regard to the question of albinism in Otters, I was astonished to read in the *Field* for March 30th, 1907, over the initials "R. B. L." the singularly ill-informed statement that he had "no record of a purely white Otter ever having been killed in this country." Apart from the very definite and well-authenticated account given in the Badminton volume on "Hunting" by the Rev. E. W. L. Davies—who, in the presence of Mr. Edward A. Sanders and his tenant Coker, a farmer at Brimpts, on Dartmoor, saw and ultimately killed "a beautiful cream-coloured Otter"

near Hucca-by-Cleaves on the West Dart, a dog of 19lb.—there is the evidence of Messrs. Harvie-Brown and Buckley in “A Fauna of Argyll” (p. 17), who report “a pure white Otter in Mr. Henry Evan’s collection at Small Isles, which was killed in Jura,” and who add “there is another at Kildalton House, Islay.”

Desmarest reports an Otter—stated by Lesson to have been found near Paris, and said by Bell to be preserved in the Museum of the Jardin des Plantes—which was “of a lively yellowish-brown colour, whitish-brown beneath; the sides of the head, the throat, and the upper parts of the neck whitish, and the whole upper part of the fur irregularly spotted with pure white.”

It must not be forgotten, however, that the tendency of stuffed Otters in glass cases, especially when exposed to the sun or to a strong light, is to grow gradually paler in colour; and I have seen a stuffed specimen which had stood out of doors for some months in Ireland and had become bleached to a dirty cream colour. White Otters, nevertheless, must be extremely rare, or they would be more frequently reported, their very colour being against them.

The range and distribution of *Lutra vulgaris* extend, in the Old World, over the whole of Europe, and over Asia north of the Himalayas.

Fossilised remains of the Otter have been found in the Norwich Crag, belonging to the upper part of the Pliocene period, in the brick earths of the Thames Valley, and in several of the English caves. Mr. H. A. Bryden assures me that there is a future for Otter-hunting in South Africa; though, so far as my own experience of the rivers of Cape Colony and the Orange Free State during a part of the Boer War (from 1899 to 1900) goes, I saw no trace of Otters on their banks.

It may not be out of place to discuss in this chapter the Otter as an article of human diet. Personally, I have eaten the heart of a young 15lb. bitch Otter, roasted in butter and herbs, and found it quite palatable; and I recently met an elderly man in Cumberland who told me he had partaken of Otter soup and found it "unobjectionable." MacGillivray says he partook of the cooked flesh of an Otter in the Isle of Harris which was "dark-coloured, rank, sapid enough, but not agreeably so; and under the skin is a layer of fat as in the seals." Daniel records that the hearts of four Otters killed near Bridgnorth in 1796 "were dressed and eaten by many respectable people . . . and allowed to be very delicious." The carcasses of these were given to the hunt servants, and "were found to be excellent." Pennant asseverates that "in the kitchen

of the Carthusian convent near Dijon we saw one preparing for the dinner of the religious of that rigid order," who do not ever eat flesh meat; and I have heard, but without being able to obtain any confirmation of the statement, that at a monastery in Devon the monks still dress and eat Otters upon Fridays and other *maigre* days—if they can get them, presumably.

This reminds us of Izaak Walton's "pleasant question" to Piscator in Chapter II. of "The Compleat Angler" as to whether an Otter is "a beast or a fish," which the huntsman left "to be resolved by the college of Carthusians who have made vows never to eat flesh." If we are to believe Pennant, they "resolved" in favour of the fish theory—small blame to them, if Otter be indeed good eating as well as "good hunting"; as there seems no reason to suppose it is not.

CHAPTER II.

THE HAUNTS AND HABITS OF THE BRITISH OTTER.

THE Otter may be called the gypsy of the animal world. In him the nomadic instinct is, of all beasts, most highly developed. He has no fixed home, like the fox and the badger, to which he regularly returns at the end of his night's work; but, like the gypsy and the Scottish tinker, is ever on the move; rarely sleeping two consecutive nights in the sameholt, yet going from one recognised place of security to another, and "camping" there for a day's rest before proceeding onwards to some other couch or kennel further down or higher up the stream, or perhaps moving across a watershed to a distant river. Such holts are used by Otters year after year and generation after generation: the Dumfriesshire Otter-hounds still find in the same holts as early in last century Mr. James Lomax did when he hunted the same water. In fact, there are many drains long since forgotten by their human contrivers which Otters still

remember and use. It is only when a holt is in a tree-root, which the action of water eventually undermines and destroys, that the Otters of to-day find themselves deprived of one of the houses of call in which their remote ancestors were wont to lie up before any modern Otter-hunter had seen the light of day. It is this trait in the character of the quarry that lends to Otter-hunting, as to cricket, much "glorious uncertainty."

There is still a great deal to be learned as to the life-history of *Lutra vulgaris*; and few creatures are more difficult of systematic study. Kept in captivity, though he is quite easily tamed and domesticated, and has even been utilised to catch fish for his owners, he loses his usual characteristics, even to the point of devouring fish in a foreign and unnatural manner; and observation of his habits under such conditions has little value.

The vast majority of country people of all classes have never seen an Otter, and even among Otter-hunters comparatively few have observed their quarry except when he is in process of being hunted. The combination of nocturnal with aquatic habits is sufficient to account for this fact; but even professed naturalists have fared little better, and in "Forest Tithes" "A Son of the Marshes" confesses that "I have perhaps only seen the animal five times in the whole course of

my life . . . though I have been looking out for him for over forty years." It may be this paucity of experience that makes him describe the Otter as "amphibious," in which error, however, he but follows Gilbert White, who never saw one alive.

Nevertheless, I fancy there are few waters in the British Isles that are not at some time haunted by Otters. They will even work canals and rivers running through populous towns, and wherever there are rocky cliffs and caves upon the seashore there will Otters be found, especially during the winter months.

When the bitch Otter is about to lay down her young, she looks out for a snug and secure retreat in close proximity to an abundant food supply, whether this be in a narrow muddy rivulet abounding with young eels and deep in the recesses of a forest, or in a dry drain among water meadows populated by frogs, or high up a mountain burn in a cairn of stones, hard by which there is good store of fresh-water crustacea and small fish fry, with perhaps the chance of a few young rabbits, upon which to nourish herself and her cubs, until they shall be old enough to be taught to fish for themselves. The locality of this breeding couch will depend upon the nature of the country which the Otter inhabits; but I think, so far as evidence is available, that more bitches move up-stream in

order to lay down their litters, and that when the cubs have grown to three or four pounds in weight they are taken down to larger water by easy stages. That the cubs remain with the mother in her wanderings for some considerable time is, I think, evidenced by the fact that they are "put down" and killed when with the bitch, up to a weight of nine or ten pounds, or even more, when they can hardly be much less than a twelvemonth old. So far as this evidence goes, it would seem to point to the Otter breeding only once in the year.

The dog Otter seems to lead a more solitary, as he does a more vagrant, life than the bitch Otter. When the latter has young cubs it is seldom that a dog Otter is found in very close proximity, though one may be put down a few miles up or down the same stream. Even with cubless bitches it is a common thing to spur the dog going up-stream while the bitch has gone down, and *vice versâ*; and in some cases the "visiting" Otter has crossed over during the night to a neighbouring river, or travelled up a tributary towards another watershed. Young cubs of anything from eight to twelve pounds would seem to hang together after their mother has gone off to lay down another litter, judging from the frequent occasions when two and even three such have been found and put down by hounds. To find cubs of different litters from the

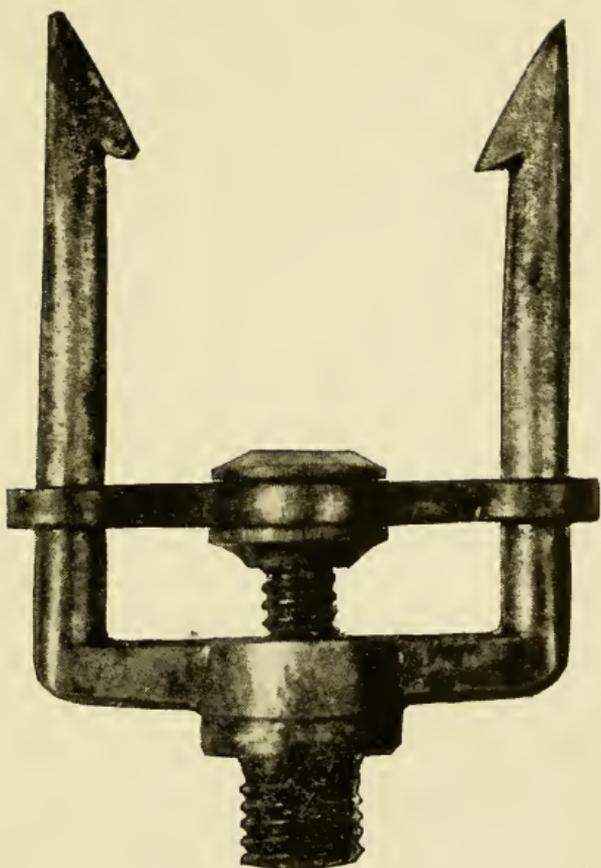
same mother in company is, so far as I am aware, an unknown experience, though two adult bitches and two adult dogs have been frequently "put down" together. The older a dog Otter, the more likely he is to be found leading a solitary existence. Otters, therefore, are not gregarious, though there is an isolated instance, well authenticated, of four bitch Otters with their families having been met in the early morning travelling overland from some small stream to the tidal estuary of a larger river. This occurred in Cornwall, and is recorded in the Badminton volume on "Hunting" on the authority of the late Mr. Trelawny of Coldrennick, and others.

The holt of the Otter may be a drain with its entrance either under or above water, or in the hollow roots of an old tree on the banks of a stream or lake—an alder is a favourite tree for this purpose—or it may be in an old rabbit burrow, or among cairns of stones, or under a pile of rocks or heap of brushwood; but it must be ready-made to his hand, for the Otter does not dig or burrow like the badger, the fox, or the rabbit. Messrs. Harvie-Brown and Buckley, in "A Fauna of Argyll," describe an "Otters' home" in the Island of Soay with great minuteness. This, they appear to think, was entirely the work of the Otters themselves; but in the mosses of Cumberland there are

what are locally termed "sod drains," much frequented by Otters, which correspond in every detail with the "home" discovered in Soay. It has been found quite feasible in suitable localities to construct artificial drains which Otters will frequent; a fact of which the owner of Pamflete, in Devon, formerly made valuable use.

Otters will frequently in summer "lie rough" at long distances from the water, under stacks of faggots, in brushwood and undergrowth, and even in thick hedgerows. They will also, of course, lie among reed-beds, and in osier beds, and withy plantations by the side of ponds and rivers, and I have on two occasions found them curled up in the sun close to the bank, from which they could slip into the water quietly at the faintest hint of danger or disturbance. They have been found, but rarely, in drains running under inhabited houses, and also on dry beds under the planking of a boat-house on some ornamental water. I have heard of an instance in which a fox, a badger, and an Otter were bolted by terriers from the same den, one after the other; but should conceive the association to be probably unique.

The food of the Otter is of great interest to those who are asked to preserve him from an untimely death by gunshot, trap and net. It is a point upon which, from time immemorial, he has been cruelly



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“Otter-grains,” or Spear-head

(Actual size).

From an ancient specimen lent by Commander Dayrell Davies, R.N.

maligned. Izaak Walton, albeit undoubtedly right in saying that "hunting the Otter . . . is much pleasanter than any other chase whatsoever," and adding, not less correctly, that "all men that keep Otter-dogs ought to have pensions from the King," yet commenced the mischief in giving voice to his erroneous belief that Otters eat nothing but fish. So far from this being the case, it is demonstrable that Otters prefer a great many articles of diet to fish, and, moreover, that these are almost invariably inimical to the increase of fish in our lakes and rivers. The fact that Otters caught young have been weaned from a fish diet to one of bread and milk, and subsequently utilised to catch fish for their masters without attempting to eat them, should in itself be a sufficient proof that fish are not their only, and not even their favourite, diet.

A bitch Otter invariably feeds her young on frogs, taking them into the water-meadows and teaching them to catch their prey before ever she teaches them to swim and catch fish. Their first experience of a fish diet is small eels, which there is no doubt Otters prefer to all else, and of which a single pair of Otters must consume an enormous quantity in a season. Frogs and eels are the greatest enemies of fish spawn, and would, unchecked, deplete the best-stocked trout river in a

comparatively brief space of time. But the Otter does more than this, by keeping down the number of moorhens and dabchicks—also eaters of fish-spawn; thinning out the water-voles that do so much to destroy the banks of navigable rivers; and consuming large numbers of crayfish, which destroy the larvæ of the May-fly and other forms of fish food.

No doubt a few young rabbits are taken by the bitch Otter after the birth of her litter, but stories of poultry and ducks having been taken by Otters have, so far as I can find, no unimpeachable evidence to back them up. Long and hard frost tries Otters more severely, perhaps, than most animals, closing against them all their customary hunting grounds and driving them in desperation to other shifts in order to obtain food. I have known them under such conditions to come about the kitchen quarters of a Highland shooting-lodge at night in search of food, and doubtless a stray duckling might, under such circumstances, fall a victim to the "sly goose-footed prowler" on his nocturnal quest of provender.

Only in the sense that it deprives him of an adequate food supply can the statement that "frost is fatal to Otters" be justified. Even small birds can live through the most intense cold if they have sufficient to eat. It is starvation that weakens and

kills, as may be proved by examining the crops or stomachs of small birds and mammals found "frozen to death." Blaine recounts that in Essex in 1796, "after the fleets had been long frozen," no fewer than nine Otters were killed by hounds in one day. Doubtless they had been so weakened by privation that, like hares after a comparatively light fall of snow, they could have been knocked over with sticks.

That Otters will, under certain circumstances, vary their diet is shown by a case mentioned by Daniel, in which one took an artificial trolling bait.

In view of the fact that, principally owing to the tardy recognition of the value of fisheries, and the consequent rise in water value for sporting purposes, an attack on the Otter by riparian owners, pisciculturists, and anglers, with no knowledge of natural history, has been widely made, it may be of use here to go a little more deeply into what an Otter eats and does not eat.

So long ago as 1874, in his preface to the stereotyped edition of White's "Selborne," published by Swan Sonnenschein and Co., Mr. J. E. Harting, in a footnote to the author's solitary mention of Otters, Letter XXIX. (p. 97), says that "they are carnivorous as well as piscivorous, and have been known to eat ducks and teal, and, while in confinement, young pigeons. Frogs form part of

their bill of fare, and even mussels at times furnish food to these animals."

What an animal will eat in confinement is no proper criterion of his normal taste in food; and no animal appears to lose his natural tastes and habits when tamed more quickly than the Otter. To their detriment the Otters in the London Zoological Gardens, for instance, eat the buns and oranges thrown them by an indiscriminating public. Pigeons of any age are not caught without difficulty by any creature unprovided with wings. Very few "ducks and teal" I should suppose fall victims to the Otter: moorhen and dabchick proving much easier prey. Frogs and eels are destroyed in enormous quantities, water-rats are by no means despised, and all these are among the very worst enemies of fish-spawn, which list includes its arch-enemy the swan. The crayfish, which feeds largely on the larvæ of ephemeræ, is also a favourite food of the Otter, and where they abound Otters also will be found. It can be seen, therefore, by anyone who can recognise facts and is capable of such simple addition as putting two and two together, that the Otter is doing that which is without the power of man, to ensure the preservation of fish life and the supply of fish-food in our streams and ponds. The Otter, it has been demonstrated experimentally, will not take trout in

preference to the so-called "coarse fish," if he has the choice; and most coarse fish feed on trout spawn when they get the chance. In trout streams, therefore, Otters "in reason" must do more good than harm: even in streams where no other fish, nor even eels, are found, as in the mountain burns of the Highlands of Scotland. There the food supply is strictly limited, with the result that burn trout seldom run fewer than five or six to the pound. The Otter, here, does good by thinning out the smaller and weaker fish without affecting the available fish-food, thereby immensely improving the character of the fishing.

In salmon rivers Otters undoubtedly take salmon, but not where there are other and more easily-caught fish to be had. The damage done in this way is, however, infinitesimal, a 25lb. Otter being practically incapable of capturing a salmon (or even a pike) of equal weight; either of which fish can swim at a rate four or five times as fast as can an Otter.

On the seashore Otters live on crabs and other crustaceans, and catch various "rock fish," which they find left in the pools and in crevices among the rocks when the tide has receded. There is a recorded instance of a large conger having been caught in this way; but that was in Ireland.

The stories one has read of Otters destroying ducks, poultry, and even grouse poults and lambs,

may safely be placed in the same category with the cows and bull-calves for which a farmer claimed compensation from the eighth Duke of Beaufort as having been destroyed by foxes.

Of course, when fish are placed in stew-ponds or the waters of hatcheries, they are, unless properly protected, at the mercy of any Otter who may chance to discover them. In the same way, if canaries with clipped wings were to be turned down in any number on a suburban lawn neighbouring cats would speedily account for most of them. But it is perfectly possible to protect fish-stock from the assaults of Otters without resorting to the gun or the barbarous and inhumane steel trap. Otters do not dig, and I have yet to learn that they can climb iron rails, or even cheap wire netting. The Otter is often blamed for the work of the heron and the kingfisher. Even in large natural lakes and ponds stocked with fish the Otter is not unseldom accused of causing their depletion; but in every case of the sort that I have investigated I have found that unsuspected pike of great size have been really accountable for the mischief, assisted by swans and other waterfowl, herons, kingfishers, eels, and frogs. In one such case I entertain some hope of having turned the noble owner of the lake from the paths of lutracide, but I trust not altogether at the expense of the herons and kingfishers.

Indeed, knowledgeable people, whether proprietors of fisheries or secretaries of angling clubs, are beginning to recognise that by their enormous destruction of eels and frogs—to say nothing of moorhens and other enemies of fish-spawn—Otters (in reason) do more good than harm to a trout stream ; and that the only humane and sportsmanlike method of keeping them within the due bounds to which in all “over-civilised” countries, such as Britain has become, the natural fauna must be confined, is by regularly hunting them with recognised packs of hounds.

Otters are capable of great natural affection, as shown by the way in which a bitch will hang about the spot where her young may be, in the teeth of hounds, until she is killed. Although for the most part silent beasts, and invariably so when being hunted, Otters give vent to a flute-like whistle when calling to each other after dusk on a pond or stretch of water ; and if one be caught in a trap another will blow and snort near it all night in its endeavours to get it freed. Tame Otters, at the sight of food, will make a curious noise, as nearly like that of a cat mewing for a piece of fish as may be, with something of a hiss mingled with the “mewing.”

Cubs taken young are quite readily reared and tamed ; but in these days they are far better left in a wild state. Many Masters of Otter-hounds have kept

tame Otters, but such have usually come to an untimely end ; and in at least one instance where one was kept about the kennels it had the effect of temporarily spoiling hounds for hunting purposes. In cases where a wet bitch has been unfortunately killed, it becomes necessary to find, if possible, the litter and bring up the young cubs by hand. They should, however, be turned out again as speedily as practicable, and left to look after themselves.

CHAPTER III.

THE OTTER IN LITERATURE AND ART.

THE earliest reference to an Otter in European literature is contained in the Second Lay of Sigurd Fafnisbana, in the Heroic part of the Poetic Edda, where Odin, Loki, and Hœnir come upon an Otter eating a fine salmon, which it has just killed, and slay it. This is Otr, the son of Hreidmar, to whom the Æsir show the skin : being condemned as punishment to fill and cover it with red gold.

Æsop and Phædrus make no mention of the Otter in their fables, though the characteristics of most other beasts are faithfully depicted there. It is fair, therefore, to surmise that the shy and retiring habits of the Otter are responsible for the ignorance of his doings which has prevented him from figuring in the pages of the early fabulists, as, indeed, from mention by those of later date—La Fontaine and Gay. The latter, as a Devonshireman, should have known something of his existence at least, though evidently not enough about his peculiar characteristics to found

a fable or a moral upon them. In the mediæval Physiologus, or Bestiary, the Otter is mentioned as entering the crocodile's mouth in order to kill it ; and this is the sole written legend concerning the Otter that I have been able to discover.

Among serious writers, he is mentioned by Varro and described by Pliny, who says that he differs from a beaver in having a tail like a land-beast while a beaver has one like a fish.

Among descriptive writers on natural history, Gilbert White and Richard Jefferies make brief mention of Otters, but "A Son of the Marshes" is more expansive. Various more modern writers on natural history and wild life have contributed accounts of observed facts about the Otter. In "Water Babies," Charles Kingsley is sound on the natural habits of the bitch Otter he introduces into that charming story ; while in his "Two Years Ago" occurs the only account of an Otter-hunt in English fiction ; though an Otter-hunt (in November!) is mentioned by Sir Walter Scott in "Guy Mannerling" as having formed one of the sports that "consumed the time merrily" during Bertram's visit to Dandie Dinmont. Izaak Walton gives, in the second chapter of "The Compleat Angler," a graphic account of a successful Otter-hunt, in which we learn from the phrase "all the horse are got over the water" that in the seventeenth century

people rode to Otter-hounds, as also that "noble Mr. Sadler," the Master, met so early that he "prevented the sunrising."

In all scientific works dealing with mammalia the Otter, of course, has place; but the meagreness of most accounts serves to prove how little of his life-history was really known to their writers.

Most works dealing with hunting mention the sport of hunting the Otter, from "The Noble Art of Venerie" (1575), ascribed to George Turbervile, to the encyclopædic manuals of Daniel, Blain, and "Stonehenge." In these accounts the now, happily, obsolete spear, or "Otter-grains," was of course used to terminate the hunt.

In the modern series of sporting literature—the "Badminton," "Hunting," and "Sports" libraries, and "The Encyclopædia of Sport"—chapters are devoted to Otter-hunting, the most informative, perhaps, being that of the late Rev. E. W. L. Davies, in the "Hunting" volume of the first-named library, though the contributions of the Hon. Gerald Lascelles and Mr. Arthur Heine-mann to other series contain much practical information in a condensed form.

The Muse has never regarded Otter-hunting with the same amount of favour as she has most other sports, though Somerville in "The Chace" has given us what is still the most spirited and realistic

account of an Otter-hunt ever written, and provided us, in the phrase "sly, goose-footed prowler," with a classical description of the Otter that is altogether admirable. The local bards of lovely Devon have not omitted to hymn the praises of Otter-hunting, in rhymed hexameters chiefly, which have been preserved, and portions of which were reprinted in 1900 in an interesting pamphlet giving an account of the Dartmoor Otter Hunt, which the present Master, Mr. A. J. Pitman, has very kindly sent me for perusal. There are also two good Lancashire Otter-hunting songs—one in dialect—printed as an appendix to Mr. Lomax's "Diary of Otter-hunting"; and a few others are given in Mr. Hedley Peek's "The Poetry of Sport."

In the realm of art the Otter, for all his handsome shape, and Otter-hunting, for all its picturesqueness, have suffered much neglect. Of purely archæological interest is the representation of an Otter in a mosaic pavement at Palestrina (Prænestina), mentioned in the *Totius Latinitatus Lexicon* of Forcellini. The Otter also occurs sparingly in heraldry, notably in the allusive arms of the family of Luttrell. There is an etching on copper, entitled "Otter-hunting," signed "Howitt in. et f." (one of a series, which includes "Grouse-shooting," similarly signed, and an etching of men and pointers in turnips with no legend) "republished by E. J. Mason, 1834," which

represents a brawling stream between wooded banks, with four hounds, of a moderately rough type with shortened sterns, and three Otter-hunters—two in the water and one on land—each having a very long pole armed with a double-pronged spear-head, on one of which the Otter is impaled. The Otter is not good, being drawn with legs and ears too long and with a rudder much too short.

In the reproduction of an old print given in "The Poetry of Sport" (p. 94), almost as many Otters as hounds are shown afoot and afloat; while mounted sportsmen are as numerous as "foot-people." The spears are not double-pronged but harpoon-tipped, with one point. From the costume depicted the period appears to be that of Charles II.

Then there is the Landseer Otter-hunting picture, which has been engraved; and, of course, there is the late Fred Tayler's painting, "Crossing the Ferry"—also engraved and published by Messrs. Graves—as to the portraits in which there was some controversy in the *Field* during 1905. The sportsmen wear the kilt, and a curiously shaped and tasselled head-dress in place of the Highland bonnet. Mr. George Wright's painting of the Dumfriesshire Otter-hounds hunting the Annan has also been reproduced in photogravure.

On the whole, both sport and quarry seem to have met with scant recognition from artists and writers

of fiction alike, a neglect which, with the increasing popularity of the sport, may possibly be remedied in the near future. Indeed, recent drawings in *Punch* by Mr. Raven Hill, and an account in a new novel, "The Shadow of the Unseen," by Messrs. Barry Pain and James Blyth, of two Otters discovered fighting on the ice near St. Olaves, in Suffolk—an incident illustrating a point in the story, but which was actually observed—seem to promise this. Mr. W. E. Norris also describes a Devonshire Otter-hunt in his latest novel, "The Square Peg."

Meanwhile, we have presented to us weekly in the illustrated Press during the summer months many very excellent photographs of Otter-hunting scenes, taken by such talented amateurs as Mr. W. J. Abrey, of Tonbridge, and other experts with the camera.

CHAPTER IV.

THE EARLY HISTORY OF THE SPORT.

OTTER-HUNTING seems to have been one of the earliest organised sports indulged in in the British Isles. It is not improbable that our Celtic ancestors pursued the Otter for sport in the boulder-strewn streams of mountainous Wales, Cumberland, Devon, and Cornwall with some species of rough-haired water-dog and flint-headed spears. At any rate, it is in these districts, to which the dispossessed Celt was driven by subsequent invaders, that Otter-hunting has always existed, and is to-day most popular and most flourishing; while, as I have shown elsewhere, the various descriptive names for the Otter in the different Celtic languages exhibit a close knowledge and appreciation of the animal's characteristics.

King John of England was the first M.O.H. of whom we have any record, and we may perhaps be allowed the speculation that his Otter-hunting experience encouraged him to "swim the Wash," with such disastrous results.

Twici seems to have been the earliest huntsman of Otter-hounds of whom any account is preserved, he having acted as such to King Edward II. In the text of his "Art of Hunting," however, there is no actual mention of Otter-hunting; but from the appendix to the edition of 1843 we glean the interesting item of information that in his day the Otter-hunting season commenced at Shrovetide and ended at Midsummer, instead of lasting from April to October as is now the case.

King Henry VIII. of England was M.O.H., and both Queen Elizabeth and King James VI. and I. kept packs of Otter-hounds.

No mention of the use of a spear occurs in Walton's description of a morning with Mr. Sadler's "Otter-dogs," where the hounds did the work unaided, Sweetlips apparently bringing the carcass docilely to "Venator" when called upon to do so.

In Somerville's days the spear was more important than the hounds in the killing of an Otter, and was used as a harpoon, being flung at the quarry in deep water as well as employed to transfix him when driven to cross a shallow. Apparently few hounds were taken out, and these merely to find the Otter; the spearing of him when "put down" being a test of skill for the huntsman and followers, akin to that required for "pig-sticking" in India to-day. The use of the spear was gradually discontinued, and



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Brown, Annan.

“Boatman,” by Bachelor—Careless. (Dumfriesshire
Otter-Hounds.)

2nd Prize Winner, Crystal Palace Show, 1907.

for nearly a century—despite Sir Harry Johnston's marvellous effort of the imagination in his "British Mammals"—it has not been used with regular packs of hounds; though one Evan Llanwensant, in Glamorganshire, employed it as an auxiliary to his single couple of hounds, and in this way killed, so "Otter" Davies tell us, "more Otters and fourmarts than all the packs in the country put together."

I have not found any early authority for the use of the spear. Turberville makes no mention of it in his description of Otter-hunting, and, as we have seen, neither does Walton in his, nearly a century later. It seems to have made its advent, like many other bad things, just prior to the eighteenth century. At any rate, it is mentioned by Somerville in 1735, and was in use in Carmarthenshire towards the end of the century. The "Otter-grains" illustrated (Plate facing page 16) was the property of "Otter" Davies, and has been kindly lent for reproduction by his son, Commander Dayrell Davies, R.N.; but how it came into his father's possession I am unable to state.

The particulars given in Daniel's "Rural Sports" (1801-2) include the use of the spear, and are reproduced in Blain's "Encyclopædia of Rural Sports" (1840) and in Stonehenge's "Manual of British Rural Sports" (1878): though it is certain that the practice had been discontinued

everywhere before the last-named date. Mr. James Lomax of Clayton Hall, whose "Diary of Otter-hunting," from 1829 to 1871, was privately printed in 1892, and is full of interesting matter, makes no mention of the spear, and never used it, depending on hounds and terriers for finding and killing his Otters, although he resorted to the practice of "sacking" Otters and removing them to more huntable waters: a plan which savours of that artificiality from which Otter-hunting, unlike other field sports, has ever been commendably free. Neither did it always "pay," judging from the records of Otters that died in the sack in course of transit. The same may be said of his custom of stopping drains prior to hunting. As many Otters were stopped in as stopped out in this way, and the risk of their being drowned so is obviously considerable. "Tailing" was probably introduced after the "Otter-grains" had ceased to be used; and certainly calls for more skill and a great deal more courage than does spearing or harpooning. "Tailing" is mentioned in one of the Devonshire ballads referred to before; as is also the use of nets to keep the Otter from going down to tidal waters. Whatever one may think of the former, which is discussed in the chapter on "Hunting," I think most Otter-hunters will agree that the use of the net—which as often drowns the Otter as not—must

be classed with that of the spear as obsolete and unsportsmanlike.

Otter-hunting has now entered upon a new phase of existence, and if it is to retain and increase its popularity as the only sport, save angling, that can be followed during the summer months, and to be in a position whence it can be easily defended from the attacks of self-advertising sentimentalists or of the budding school of imperfectly educated Snippy-Bits "nature students," it must retain its well-won reputation for absence of artificiality, which may only be done by discarding these methods of the past.

The Otter should be found, hunted, and killed by means of trained hounds and terriers, with only such assistance as may be given them by the huntsman and the Field at the time. Not even the best-trained pack could find, hunt, and kill their Otter without human aid; but the latter will be confined to the "spurring," "gazing," and "tally-ing" of the quarry, the formation of "stickles" in order to keep him, if it be possible, from unhuntable water, the "making in" of an impracticable drain or holt into which an Otter might escape during the progress of a hunt, the use of crow-bar or spade to enlarge a drain for terriers or to shift the quarry, and, in certain circumstances, the final "tailing" of him in order to end a good hunt handsomely.

CHAPTER V.

HOUNDS AND TERRIERS.

HOUNDS used for Otter-hunting are of two sorts, loosely described as "rough" and "smooth." These may again be sub-divided, the rough into the true Otter-hound and the rough Welsh hound, either fox-hound or harrier, and the smooth into ordinary stag-hounds, fox-hounds, and harriers. Besides these, there are cross-bred or half-bred hounds between the true Otter-hound and the stag- or fox-hound. The latter, though they sometimes run small, are more usually big, upstanding hounds, with the rough coat of the Otter-hound and the cat-feet of the stag- or fox-hound. Personally, I do not care for them; they have not the fine voice of the former nor, I think, the endurance of the latter. They are more given to riot, in my experience, and certainly tire earlier in the day; and on a blank draw or a faint, catchy drag seem often disinclined to work or try, though some Masters swear by them.

However he was originally bred—a subject upon which authorities differ—the rough Otter-hound, as

we know him now, is undoubtedly the best animal for the pursuit of the quarry from which he derives his name. Formerly he was hardly used at all in the South, the Devonshire folk, especially, preferring the fox-hound; but, to-day, there are very few packs into which he has not been introduced.

The Dumfriesshire Hunt is deservedly famous for possessing and breeding the finest specimens of this hound, and a majority of Otter Hunts are indebted to the Dumfriesshire for the blood they now possess. Formerly it was difficult to raise the height of the rough Otter-hound above twenty-two inches, which meant that he had to swim in water where the bigger fox-hound could walk. To-day, however, the standard of height has been raised, and the Dumfriesshire kennels contain hounds of twenty-six inches and over: which is large enough for any work.

I do not propose here to go into the science of hound-breeding. Many abler pens than mine have said "last words" at different times on this subject, and what is left to be taught about it cannot be learned from books. I shall merely enumerate the points for which an Otter-hound should be bred.

The *head* should be grave and dignified, like that of a bloodhound, but flatter and harder; the

forehead long and narrow ; the *eyes* dark in colour, large, but sunken, and showing the haw ; the *nostrils* black and of a good size ; the *muzzle* rough-haired ; the *lips* full and hanging ; the *ears* large, thin, pendulous, well-coated with coarse hair, but without any tendency to feather. The *neck* should be throaty, muscular, and of good length ; the *chest* deeper than it is wide ; the *back* strong, long, and straight ; the *ribs* deep, rather loose, but strong ; *shoulders* powerful and well sloped ; *elbows* well let down ; *legs* straight as gun-barrels ; *thighs* muscular. The *feet* have hitherto been allowed to be large, well-webbed, with firm, hard soles, but of late years hounds have been bred with the cat-shaped feet of the fox-hound, with what advantage it is perhaps too soon to speak decisively. The *stern* should be carried in a sloping position, and should be well coated with hair, growing less towards the end, where there should be no suspicion of a tuft or of " feather." The *coat* is hard, dense, wiry, not short ; its *colour* may be of any of the following shades and combinations.: grizzled-pied, dull white and cream-tan, buff, brown or brown-tan, black and tan, black and white, or black. *Height* as much above twenty-two inches as possible. In judging, where everything else is equal, it is safest to favour height ; where a good head and poor stern are in competition with a poor head and good stern

favour the good head, since it is with the latter that the hound will have to work.

Of stag-hound, fox-hound, Welsh hound, and harrier drafts there is nothing for me to say. They are probably cast from their proper kennels for faults, age, or over-height; many of them are "gift hounds," Masters of Otter-hounds being often presented with them or buying them for next to nothing. If a fox-hound really enters well to the sport he may become invaluable, especially as a marking-hound; but the Badminton volume puts the chances against his doing so at 10 to 1—a trait not shared by the Otter-hound nor even by the Welsh hound. There can be no doubt, however, that the fox-hound *kills* an Otter better than any other.

Those who have not hunted much with packs of rough Otter-hounds are apt to take exception to their full musical voices, which, to the sportsman who has really studied them and learned to love and understand them, mean so much added enjoyment to the day's sport, and are not, as their detractors say, mere "babble."

In forming a new pack the Master will have to decide whether he will go in for the pure Otter-hound solely, or for a mixed pack, or for one composed wholly of fox-hounds. In his decision he will probably be swayed by early prejudice in one direction or another.

If the Otter-hound speaks more freely to an older drag the fox-hound will sometimes slip away "mute" with an Otter and spoil a day's sport. If the Otter-hound is not so quick at a kill, he is not so liable to "riot," especially at foxes, which are often found in osier-beds when drawing for an Otter.

There are drawbacks on either side of the argument as to whether rough or smooth hounds shall be employed. For looks and cry and all-round working qualities a pack of pure Otter-hounds is undoubtedly to be chosen: for a quick method of hunting and for dash and finish at a kill probably a mixed pack would be awarded the palm. But, as Mr. Wilson Davidson, the Field Master and Honorary Huntsman of the Dumfriesshire Otter-hounds for twenty years, has maintained, if all Masters of Otter-hounds would give their attention to breeding the rough hound they would soon be able to breed out such faults as he may possess, and he would speedily take his proper place as the only hound employed for hunting his proper quarry.

Turberville cordially recommends the employment of bloodhounds as trail-hounds, and I once entered a bloodhound bitch of the Chatley strain, who proved excellent on a drag, and who swam the foil, though slow in the water. She would seize and hold an Otter, but would take no part in breaking

him up or in eating his flesh when killed. I had previously trained her to hunt the clean boot, when she ran mute; but, curiously enough, she gave tongue on the trail of an Otter, and her voice was the most musical in the pack.

Doubtless, there is a good strain of bloodhound blood in the composition of the modern rough Otter-hound; and I have seen a six-months' puppy, the produce of a bloodhound bitch by an Irish water-spaniel, that was almost indistinguishable from a pure-bred Otter-hound, save for a distinct tendency to "feather" in the coat.

The terriers are a most important adjunct to a pack of Otter-hounds. Without good terriers it is almost impossible to bolt Otters when hounds have marked, or to make quite sure that the quarry is not at home where the mark has been at all doubtful. A terrier for Otter-hunting must be "dead game" and full of sense. The terrier who will "lay-to" an Otter and move him with his tongue is worth twenty of the terrier who attempts to do so with his teeth. The terrier who, like the eighth Duke of Beaufort's Billy, will go under water to find the entrance to a holt is not often either found or "made"; though I have one that will do it.

Otters are held—I do not know upon what authority—to bolt better to a white terrier than to one of any other colour. This has led to the

employment of the English fox-terrier with most packs of Otter-hounds; but not the leggy, snipy terrier of the show-bench. A fox-terrier much over 15lb. in weight is useless for Otter-hunting; he could never negotiate the drains and holts in which an Otter can take refuge. The old style of "Jack Russell" fox-terrier was probably the best of his race for this and other sporting purposes; but he has become very rare of late years. All fox-terriers are excitable creatures, and a brace of terriers straining at a lead in the kennel-boy's hands and whining whenever hounds speak or they get near the water is an unspeakable nuisance, getting hounds' heads up and annoying everybody throughout the day.

The disadvantage of employing red, or black, or grizzled terriers is, of course, that, being so like an Otter in colour, hounds in a worry are apt to mistake them for the quarry and kill them before they can be saved. Even white fox-terriers when covered with mud and blood are apt to meet with this untimely end. Between fighting the Otter underground and being mistaken for him when they emerge, I am afraid the mortality among terriers used for Otter-hunting is rather alarming.

Personally, I believe in the Highland terrier—not the useless show-bench Scottish or Aberdeen terrier, but the original stock from which both Skye and

Aberdeen are derived, which once upon a time boasted the thoroughly apposite name of "Die-hard." He is of many colours—black, grey, red, grizzled, cream, and white; weighs from 13lb. to 17lb.; is "dead game" at anything—I have one that attacked an elephant, and tried to eat a five-months-old leopard cub under the impression that such monstrosities ought not to be allowed to exist—will take the water like a fish, and swim all day. Biodag held a 14lb. Otter for ten minutes on one occasion when hounds had passed him and gone on, and he is as good at "finding" as a marking fox-hound. He was badly shaken once by a hound as he emerged from a holt after shifting the Otter by another exit and getting rather mauled in the process; but the long, rough hair on his neck and shoulders saved him when a fox-terrier would have succumbed.

Colonel Malcolm of Poltalloch has a kennel of these terriers, that his family has bred white for generations, and to which he has recently applied the name of White West Highland Terriers. I believe they were originally employed for the purpose of killing Otters. If they do not degenerate into the show-bench Aberdeen type of terrier, and do not become too heavy, they should prove ideal dogs for Otter-hunting purposes, and would look well running with a pack of rough hounds. In fact, several are,

I believe, so employed with the Argyllshire and East of Scotland O.H.

In order to guard against the chance of accident, terriers should, undoubtedly, be kept in kennel with hounds, or, at least, taken there daily and fed with them. Whether they should be allowed to run with hounds or not is a debatable question. If they do there is less chance of their being accidentally killed by hounds in mistake for the Otter; but, at the same time, there is always the danger of the terriers getting into a couch where cubs are and killing the litter before anyone can prevent such a disaster. The wise Master will weigh the value of his terriers against the value of a litter of cubs, and decide accordingly.

The price of hounds is an important matter to the Master or Committee charged with the formation or upkeep of a pack. Mr. Arthur Heinemann, in "The Master of Hounds," fixes £200 as a "medium price" for a "decent pack"; but does not specify whether of rough or smooth hounds. He wrote prior to 1903, and since then three packs have come into the market: the Milton being sold as a pack for 50 guineas; the Hamilton being sold in lots for a little over £80; and the pack owned by Captain Reynolds being dispersed for an aggregate of 85½ guineas for hounds, puppies, and terriers.

It should be quite possible to get together a mixed pack of ten couple of working hounds for £50, and for 100 guineas an even larger pack, containing some really good hounds, ought to be obtainable. For smooth hounds an average of £5 a couple ought not to be exceeded in forming a new pack; for the true rough Otter-hound, from a "crack" kennel like the Dumfriesshire, this figure will be greatly exceeded. It will be found almost impossible to purchase singly a reliable marking hound, for the simple reason that no one will sell any such; they are too rare and too valuable to be parted with by their fortunate possessors.

Terriers for Otter-hunting do not usually run into money. A couple of guineas apiece is about the average. It is usual to buy them young and cheap, and "make" them afterwards; but a really game dog who never tells a lie is worth a fair price.

The feeding of Otter-hounds is not so expensive as that of packs which are required to do their hardest work during the winter months, because less flesh is necessary to keep them in condition. In the summer, when they are at work, very little flesh meat will keep them fit, and horseflesh is cheap since there is but little demand for it in fox-hound and harrier kennels at this time of year. During the winter, when hounds are resting, even less flesh meat is necessary; but they should get their two hours' road

exercise every week-day with perhaps a longer spell once or twice a week. If this plan be pursued the "physicking" common to the early spring process of "conditioning" in some kennels will largely obviated. The medicine-chest in most kennels is usually much too capacious, and its contents might in many cases be sorted out and simplified with great advantage.

There is one danger to which Otter-hounds are in some "countries" more liable than other hounds—death from adder-bite. The huntsman should keep an eye open for casualties of this kind, and either he or the kennel-boy should, in the hunting-field, carry a small supply of sal-volatile and olive-oil ready mixed in the proportion of 30 drops of the former to 2oz. of the latter. A drench of this size should be given at once to a hound bitten by an adder, and repeated after a lapse of six hours, the wound being rubbed with the same mixture. This remedy was, I think, originally published in *The Field*. For terriers the drench should be about a quarter of the above quantity, the proportions of the two ingredients remaining the same.

I append a list of names suitable for Otter-hounds. In many kennels drafts from Otter-hound, staghound, and foxhound packs are received which are already named, and no effort is made to change

these names, even if there be more than one hound of the same name already in kennels. I have met no fewer than three Sailors in one pack at the same time. It is quite a simple matter to make even an old hound answer to a new name, and it obviates the chance of confusion both in the field and in kennels to have no two hounds called alike. It is advisable to have a system in naming hounds, and to give puppies of the same litter names beginning with the same letter of the alphabet. The following does not pretend to be a complete list of hound-names, but only of such as seem to me—without being fanciful—to be particularly applicable to Otter-hounds :—

List of Names Suitable for Otter-hounds.

Dogs.

Acheron	Bulrush
Admiral	Captain
Anchorite	Caradoc
Angler	Castaway
Ardent	Challenger
Bailiff	Charon
Bargeman	Chaunter
Baronet	Chavender
Bellman	Chieftain
Boatman	Chimer
Boatswain	Choirboy
Boisterous	Chorister
Bo'sun	Clamorous

Clangour	Kingfisher
Commodore	Landsman
Councillor	Lanyard
Cruiser	Lasher
Demon	Launcher
Deveron	Leadsman
Diver	Lifebuoy
Driver	Linguist
Farrigaig	Locksman
Ferryman	Mariner
Finder	Marker
Fisherman	Marksman
Gallant	Marquis
Galloper	Marshman
Garrulous	Merman
Gauger	Messmate
Glider	Midshipman
Grapnel	Millrynd
Grappler	Mutineer
Guardsmen	Mutinous
Guider	Navigator
Halcyon	Neptune
Harbinger	Newsman
Helicon	Oarsman
Hellespont	Orator
Helmsman	Ossian
Highlander	Pealer
Hurricane	Pharpar
Islander	Phosphorus
Islesman	Piper
Keeper	Pilot



Copyright by]

[Brown, Annan.

“Dowager,” by Bachelor—Doubtless. (Dumfriesshire
Otter-Hounds.)

Champion, Crystal Palace Show, 1907.

Pirate	Sportsman
Prattler	Stormer
Puntsman	Tacksman
Raleigh	Tattler
Rambler	Thunder
Ranter	Tideway
Rouser	Traveller
Rubicon	Triton
Sailor	Tulliver
Sandboy	Vagabond
Scrambler	Vagrant
Seaman	Vaunter
Signaller	Viscount
Sindbad	Wader
Smuggler	Wanderer
Solway	Warbler
Songster	Warrior
Sonorous	Waterman
Soundwell	Yachtsman
Spinner	Yawner

BITCHES.

Artemis	Credible
Beautiful	Dairymaid
Butterfly	Dosmary
Charmer	Dowager
Chauntress	Duchess
Circe	Fanciful
Coraline	Flotsam
Countess	Harmony
Credence	Iris

Isis	Saffron
Jetsam	Sailoress
Joyous	Salamis
Lady	Sappho
Lifebelt	Scylla
Limpid	Seapie
Lorelei	Seaweed
Lucid	Shallow
Lurline	Singwell
Madrigal	Songstress
Marchioness	Streamlet
Maritime	Sunrise
Mayfly	Syren
Mermaid	Tamar
Merrymaid	Tamson
Milfoil	Telltale
Millrace	Tempest
Musical	Trinket
Mutiny	Truthful
Narrative	Tunable
Nautical	Tuneful
Nautilus	Undine
Niobe	Venus
Osprey	Vestal
Placid	Vocal
Princess	Voluble
Prioress	Wagtail
Prudence	Waterwitch
Rainbow	Windermere
Rapid	Witchcraft
Rivulet	Wondrous

CHAPTER VI.

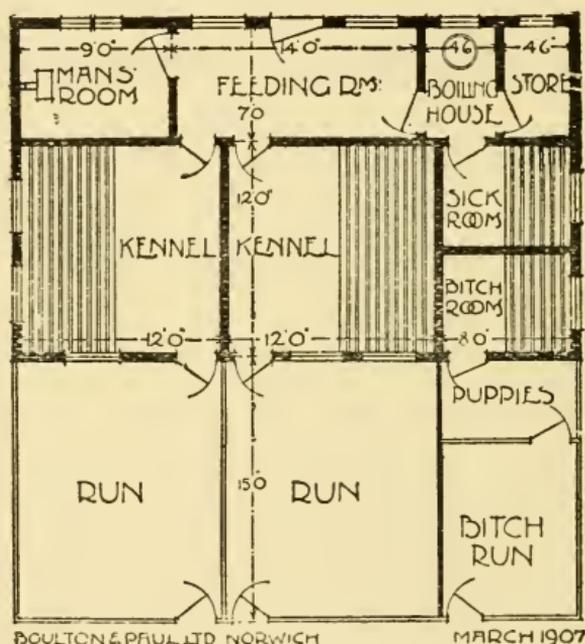
KENNELS AND HOUND-VANS.

KENNELS for Otter-hounds need not be so capacious nor so expensive to build as those for packs of fox-hounds or harriers, though they will have to be larger, and consequently to cost more, than kennels for the accommodation of beagles.

As in the case of the latter, there are usually no funds with which to erect costly and ornamental kennels; at the same time, things are not, or should not usually be, so bad that it is necessary to adapt some tumble-down farm-buildings to the purposes of hound-kennels. This proceeding is really a waste of money, as yards and floors have to be concreted and drained the same as for proper kennels; benches and boilers have to be installed, and railings fixed. When the lease runs out or it becomes advisable to move the kennels to another locality the labour of dismantling and removing these fixtures is not worth the expense; while if the hounds are given up for any reason the fittings fetch next to nothing, and all the money spent on

them and on the concreting and drainage is absolutely lost.

Far better is it to build kennels which when done with or to be removed may be sold as they stand or taken down and transported readily to another site.



Designed by

[L. C. R. Cameron.]

Fig. 1. Ground-Plan of Kennels for Otter-hounds.

There are several firms who make a speciality of supplying kennels "ready-made," so to speak, with walls in sections, roofs bundled, and ready for the purchaser to erect on his foundation-floor. Many of these are elaborate buildings—hunting-stables and hound-kennels combined—ranging in

price from the £1,000 article down to modest little structures capable of accommodating a few couples

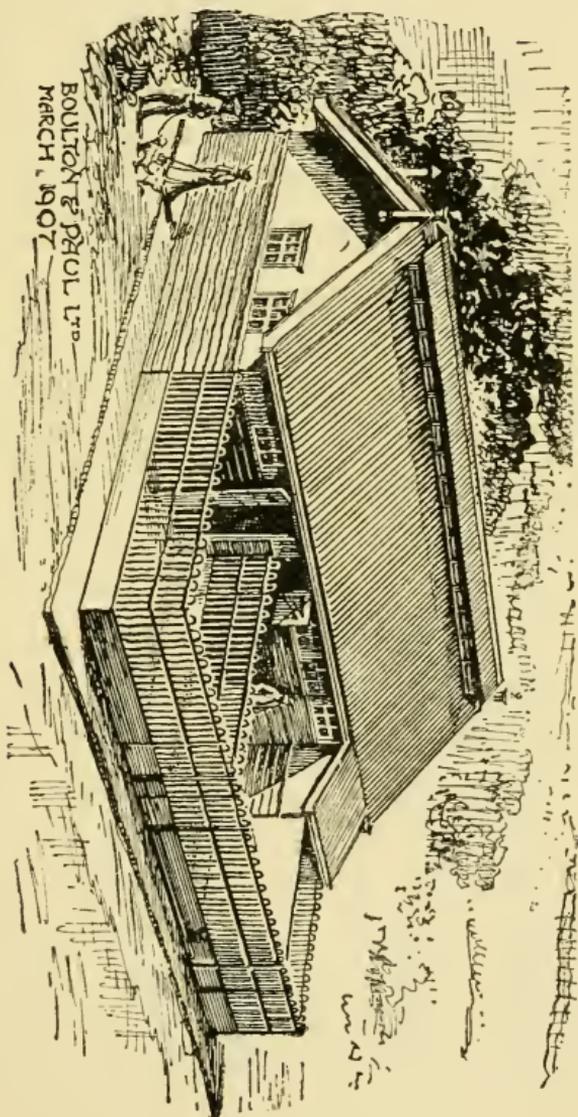


Fig. 2. Sketch-view of Otter-hound Kennels.

of foot-beagles at a first cost of something like £30. Except in the larger and more expensive buildings,

however, it is seldom that the requirements of a pack of Otter-hounds are provided for in these ready-designed and ready-made kennels. Within the compass of a reasonable size and a moderate price it has hitherto not been possible to secure a room for the kennelman, a store-room, boiling-house, hospital-kennel, bitch-room, and puppy-run.

The illustration (Fig. 1) shows the ground-plan of kennels that shall combine all these requisites in one building. It is the result of personal experience of what is really required in kennels for Otter-hounds, and the design having been submitted to Messrs. Boulton and Paul, of Norwich, a firm pre-eminent in this class of work, they have arranged to supply kennels to this plan, presenting the outward appearance when erected shown in Fig. 2, for the exceedingly reasonable (approximate) price of £110.

A glance at the plan shows two fair-sized lodging-rooms with runs, a bitch-room on the principle of the bitch- and puppy-houses recommended in the "Badminton" volume on "Hunting," with a good feeding-room, isolated sick-room, boiling-house with store-room adjacent, and a man's room, sufficiently large to serve as a sleeping apartment, all under the same roof, the whole structure, yards included, occupying a space of nearly 1,100 square feet.

Such kennels may be erected on any convenient site. A paddock in a convenient situation, with a good slope for drainage purposes, and a sound water-supply, may be purchased or rented on lease, the drains made, and a concreted floor laid 34ft. long by 32ft. wide; and the kennels, arriving in sections, may be erected by local labour on this foundation without further trouble. The cost of material and labour varies in different localities, but £40 ought to cover it almost anywhere, so that the total first cost of erecting these kennels would be £150.

If for any reason it becomes necessary to remove them, they can be taken down as easily, and transported elsewhere; or can be sold as they stand, since they will serve admirably for the accommodation of either foot-harriers, beagles, or even small packs of harriers or fox-hounds, although primarily intended for anything between fifteen and twenty couples of Otter-hounds.

In getting kennels in this way, of course a great deal depends upon the reliance that the Master or Committee is able to place in the manufacturer, more especially as to the accuracy with which they are originally made, the method of numbering the sections, the manner in which they are packed and despatched, and so forth. Judging from the kennels which Messrs. Boulton and Paul sent me

to Inverness-shire some few years ago, which I was able to erect in a couple of days with nothing but unskilled labour, not an item being found missing, damaged, or wrongly numbered, despite a varied voyage by rail, steamboat, and farm-cart, this firm is quite reliable, and where new kennels are required may be confidently employed.

The ideal situation of kennels for Otter-hounds does not differ from that of any other kennels for hounds, except that it is more necessary that, geographically speaking, they should be established at some spot which renders access easy to a majority of the waters belonging to the country hunted. Where such territory is extensive, perhaps covering several counties, it is essential that the kennels shall be built near a railway junction, in a central position, whence branch lines radiating in various directions will enable hounds to be taken to all parts of their country, often by early trains on the mornings of meeting. The expense and inconvenience of "lying out" away from home will thus be obviated; but, of course, where fixtures for a fortnight or more at a time are arranged for a distant locality, it will be cheaper and simpler to "lie out" in temporary kennels for the whole period. Often some subscriber to the hunt will put hounds up for the time they are hunting in his neighbourhood; but, failing this, the best has to be made of

inn-stables or a barn. Hounds never do so well in such quarters as when they are at home, and where hounds are quarrelsome "lying out" is provocative of fights.

Otter-hunting has always been a more or less gypsy-like pursuit, and the employment of caravans is, as much now as ever, advantageous to the pursuit of the sport. With two caravans—one fitted as a living- and sleeping-wagon for the staff, the other forming a travelling-van and lodging-room for hounds, with a separate compartment in which a small stove, boiler, and store-cupboards are installed—the pack may be carried about the country with a minimum of discomfort and inconvenience, and at the end of a day's hunting the caravans may be found close at hand, and a long and tiresome journey thus saved both hounds and men.

Hound-vans are of different types, and can be obtained from such a firm as the Bristol Wagon Co. at prices ranging from £45 for a covered van of the wagonette type, with hinged seats, as illustrated (Plate facing page 80). The cover is removable, the front and back are close-boarded and fitted with ventilation louvres, the body is 6ft. long by 3ft. 6in. wide inside, varnished on the natural wood, and the van is fitted with shafts, pole, lamps, and brake.

The above-named firm also make a small open brake, 4ft. 4in. by 3ft. 4in. inside measurements,

the seats of which hinge down so that hounds may be carried in it, while it can be used for other purposes when the seats, carpet, and cushions are replaced. The price of this vehicle complete is £60.

A covered van, designed by myself, in two compartments—one forming a lodging-room for hounds, the other (and smaller) containing sleeping berths for two men, with accommodation for stores, medicines, small stove and boiler, and arrangements for carrying feeding-troughs and all requisites for “lying-out” for a lengthy period away from kennels—is estimated for by the Bristol Wagon Co. at approximately 100 guineas. With such a van complete independence of local hospitality or indifferent inn accommodation is attained. The van is almost a “home from home” for hounds, who may be made as comfortable there as in their own kennels.

For particulars of caravans suitable for the Master of a travelling pack and his friends I must refer my readers to my “Book of the Caravan,” published by Mr. L. Upcott Gill, in which full details are given of caravans for sporting purposes.

A useful adjunct to kennels is a two-wheeled float, furnished with roller, ropes, and apparatus for loading and removing the bodies of dead horses from the places in which they have died to the kennel “larder.”

Whatever the findings of the Committee appointed

by the President of the Board of Agriculture and Fisheries, under the chairmanship of Lord Middleton, to inquire into the nature of distemper in dogs in Great Britain, I feel sure that one of the contributory causes to the continuance of this dread disease will be discovered in the defective drainage of the majority of even the finest kennels in the country. A system of drainage that would be condemned at sight were it applied to a row of almshouses or artisans' dwellings is considered sufficiently good for a pack of hounds valued at a couple of thousand guineas or more. I have seen the drainage from expensive and otherwise well-equipped kennels of fox-hounds, some 45 couples strong, discharging into a ditch running under the main road not fifty yards from the lodging-rooms, and close to the entrance-gates. This ditch was practically dry for half the year, and all the hounds were in and out of it at least twice a day, an occasional pail of carbolic being perfunctorily slapped at the drain-exit if complaints happened to be made in the hot weather by regular frequenters of the road. Even where the regular drainage of kennels is in fair order, it is rare to find that there is any system of draining the slaughter-house properly; nor are arrangements for the prompt removal or disposal of used straw from the kennels usually efficient. In some kennels thigh-bones and heads of horses are even allowed to

lie about indefinitely in the grass-yards and paddocks.

Wherever there is drainage, manure, blood, or dead flesh exposed, there will disease-germs be present, with swarms of flies, rats, and other living disseminators of such germs. In such conditions where distemper breaks out there is every chance for its unchecked spread, and in unfavourable circumstances for an increase in its normal virulence. There is probably no reason why the disease should not be permanently stamped out in the kennels of Great Britain. But it is not enough to have the lodging-houses and runs kept clean; the whole surroundings of a perfect kennel of hounds should be kept as sweet and wholesome as those of a model dairy. In many cases, I believe that the germs of distemper are actually "fed" to puppies in the kennels before they go out to walk; and again when they are returned from farms and private dwellings, where they have escaped the disease owing to a superior standard of cleanliness, coupled with freedom from the confinement necessarily incidental to hound-kennels.

The other scourge of kennels is that distressing form of rheumatism known as "kennel lameness," which can only be combated successfully by keeping the lodging-rooms absolutely dry. If they are built upon the upper slope of a hill, with a

south-east aspect and a natural or artificial basis of stiff clay interposed beneath the concrete or other non-porous floor upon which the buildings are erected, this desideratum of dryness should be attained. Kennels that are properly situated, perfectly drained, thoroughly dry—in the sense especially that the heat of hounds' bodies cannot draw up the natural moisture in the ground—and kept scrupulously clean, should be practically free from disease. If they are all this and hounds not healthy the fault must lie with the kennelman, and the system of kennel management, feeding, and exercise adopted will require careful examination with a view to revision.

In these important matters opinions differ, and always will differ, as to what is best. Some feed in the morning, others in the afternoon. Some feed cold, and some with the chill off; some feed thick, and some in a "sloppy" condition. The best test as to whether any particular system is right is whether the pack to which it is applied is well, looks well, and hunts well. If it does and is, the system adopted is obviously good enough for these particular hounds. If not, it equally obviously demands instant and complete alteration. Personally, I prefer to feed at 3 p.m., and to feed cold and thick on non-hunting days in summer, and with the chill off after hunting and through the winter months.

As I have previously remarked, these points have been dealt with by many authorities, and there is no reason for going into them here, since the management and feeding of Otter-hounds present no remarkable differences from that pertaining to any other hounds.

Exercise is as important as feeding; but save that they have to be exercised in winter when other hounds are hunting, and that it is vastly more important to have their feet hard at the beginning of the season by reason of the amount of work they will have to do in the water, there is very little to say about exercise for Otter-hounds. Some slack Masters and huntsmen let hounds "slide" the moment the season is over, instead of keeping them in full and fair exercise throughout the winter. If the latter duty were insisted on, all the unnecessary worry of "physicking and conditioning" in the spring would be done away with, and vets.' fees and druggists' bills would not figure so largely in the annual balance-sheet of the hunt.

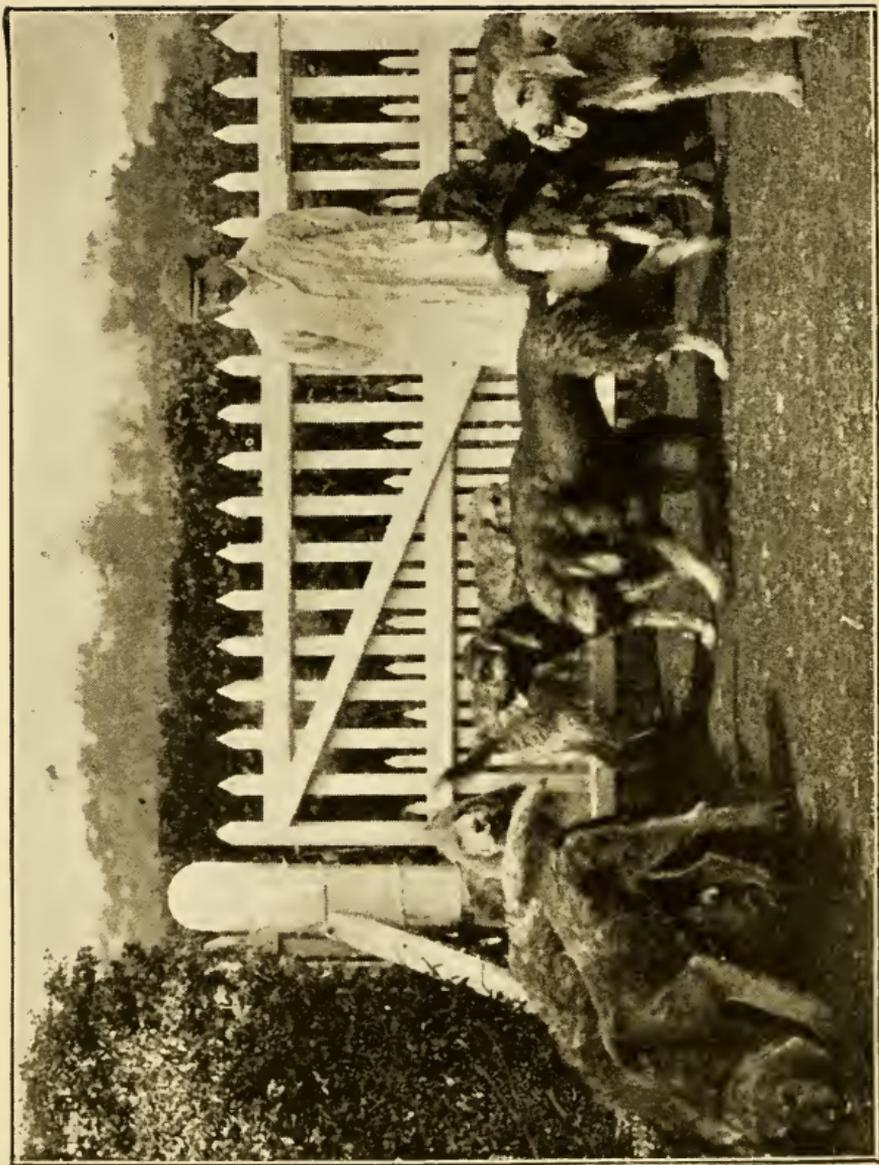
CHAPTER VII.

HUNTING KIT AND EQUIPMENT.

THE kit necessary for Otter-hunting is by no means so elaborate or expensive as that worn by sportsmen who regularly subscribe to and follow packs of staghounds, foxhounds, or harriers. It need not cost more than the clothes worn by those who hunt with packs of foot-harriers or beagles; but whereas any old mufti is usually worn for this purpose, except by the hunt officials, it is customary with Otter-hunts for regular subscribers to wear a prescribed uniform, which differs for each hunt. The rules on the subject of who is and who is not entitled to wear this uniform also vary: in some hunts, as the West Cumberland, only members of the staff are allowed to wear the uniform; in others, as with Mr. Courtenay Tracy's, a hunt club is formed, to which election is by ballot, from among whose members the officials and committee are chosen, and by whom alone the uniform is worn; in yet other hunts payment of a fixed minimum subscription entitles the subscriber to don the hunt dress.

As "pink" is associated with fox-hunting and green with hare-hunting, so red and blue have become the most popular colours for Otter-hunting uniforms. Formerly a scarlet coat was the favourite, and such is in England still worn by the Culmstock, while many of the blue uniforms are relieved by touches of red in collar, cap, waistcoat, or stockings: the Crowhurst also started as red-coats, but has now abandoned them for coats of a cheerful blue, as did the Cheriton before it. Green is worn by the followers of Mr. Courtenay Tracy and Mr. Davies, and by members of the late King's and Milton packs, grey being the distinctive colour of the West Cumberland uniform, and dark brown that of the Ynysfor. In Highland Scotland, where it is sometimes necessary to have a hunt servant or member of the staff a long way ahead of hounds—especially in the neighbourhood of deer-forests or large sheep farms—who must consequently be easily distinguishable at a distance from shepherds and keepers, a striking uniform is essential; so we find the Argyllshire sports a red coat, which can be seen further than any other in daylight.

Blaine mentions a green dress turned up with red, worn with a fur cap with gold band, and long waterproof thigh-boots with gold or red tassels, as the correct form of Otter-hunting dress of a remote past, and Bell quotes a description of Squire



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[Brown, Aman.

Dumfriesshire Otter-Hounds: some of the Pack with Joe Parker, k.h.

Lloyd of Glasnevin returning from Otter-hunting attended by "three men neatly dressed in scarlet coats and white trousers, with long spears, upon which were suspended three huge Otters." Fur caps, thigh-boots, and trousers have happily followed the spear or "Otter-grains" into oblivion.

The old-fashioned "pot" or bowler hat, usually worn white or grey, is still retained by the Cheriton, Mr. Hastings Clay's, and the Culmstock; but in all other hunts the cloth or flannel cap, either of the deerstalker, or double-peaked, or the "Portland" shape, is worn. In very hot weather a panama, with the hunt riband or a band of the same colour as the jacket or tie, is often adopted. In several hunts a pad worn in front of the cap is part of the uniform; but unless the Master wears some distinctive article of attire—as the yellow waist-coat worn by the Master and Deputy-Master of the Cheriton—it is perhaps better that he alone should mount the pad.

The chief essential in an Otter-hunting uniform is that it should be not only wear-resisting but of woollen stuff, so that when wet it shall not incommode the wearer or render him liable to contract chills or rheumatism. A short serge jacket with pockets high up to keep watches and so forth out of water when wading, flannel shirt, loose knicker-

bockers of strong woollen serge, thick woollen hose, and shoes or Highland *brogues* (which do not hold water like boots) form the most workmanlike costume for Otter-hunting. If not entitled to wear a hunt uniform, the follower of Otter-hounds should equip himself as above, having his knickerbockers made of blue or white serge, and his jacket of serge or flannel in some unmistakably mufti pattern and colour. Cotton cords or tightly-cut riding or knickerbocker breeches are not comfortable when wet, and trousers are useless if one is to take any real part in the sport. Plenty of eyelet holes pierced in the lower part of the uppers of *brogues* or shoes will let the water run out quickly.

In some hunts special materials are manufactured for the uniform, and it is well to get these. Thus in Mr. Hastings Clay's Hunt the stuff used for cap, coat, waistcoat, and knickerbockers is of special colour and make: with the Culmstock the stuffs are usually supplied by Messrs. Haddon, of Wellington, Somerset: and Messrs. Tautz and other London firms supply a special hard-wearing woollen serge for the white breeches worn with Mr. Courtenay Tracy's and some other packs. These only occasionally require washing, as on returning from a hard day, when perhaps the sportsman has been wading up to his middle in muddy water, all that is necessary is to throw them into a tub of spring water,

when they can be wrung out and rough-dried on the following morning. They will eventually acquire a delicate cream hue, more pleasing to the eye than staring white.

In Otter-hunting one often goes by train and "lies out" at an inn for the night before the meet. A small case for a single change of apparel becomes a necessity. One of the cheap "quick-change" cases made by S. Fisher, Ltd., 188, Strand, is exactly suited for this event, especially if it be fitted with Fisher's waterproof bag, into which all one's wet clothes and boots can be thrown, securely buttoned in, and packed so as to keep the damp contents away from dry apparel and toilet articles.

Apart from clothes the equipment of the Otter-hunter is very simple, consisting solely of a serviceable pole. This should be of a length dictated by the height of the user: nothing looks more ridiculous than a very short Otter-hunter with a very long pole. As a matter of fact, a six-foot pole should serve for anyone who is not really gigantic, but the usual rule is for one's pole not to exceed one's stature by more than a foot. Most poles are made of ash, though some people prefer the more clumsy bamboo pole as being lighter. A diameter of $1\frac{1}{4}$ in. gives the most serviceable size: a thinner pole than this has little strength and will warp easily, while a thicker

will be too heavy and unwieldy. For ladies a tin pole is strong enough. The ends should be shod with steel, and one should have a V-shaped prong, like a miniature punt-pole, which gets a better grip of rocky, gravelly, and pebbly bottoms than the single-pointed cylindrical spike. It may be useful to know that poles of this type and of first-rate finish are now obtainable from Messrs. Swaine and Adeney, 185, Piccadilly. There is a good deal of diversity in the Otter-poles commonly seen. Some are shaped so as to be larger in the middle than towards the ends, others have no steel cap at one end, a few have a ring inserted where formerly the spear was screwed in, and others again are brass-mounted and bound with ornamental spirals of brass wire.

In the latter, as with those made of male bamboo, brass tacks are driven in to record the kills instead of notches being cut in the wood. These poles are highly ornamental, especially if the wood has been polished as well as the brass: but they have a lady-like and drawing-room appearance somewhat inappropriate to the waterside. The plainer and more workmanlike the pole the more sportsmanlike it will also be. The notches should not be so large as to be gashes in the wood, nor should they be mere lines possessing length without breadth. Half an inch long by two-fifths of an inch

broad at the broadest part is a sound limit. When starting a new pole it is well to leave a space sufficient for another notch between each pair cut. Should the pole then last many seasons additional notches can be inserted. When a pole is accidentally broken in the field it is allowable to "transfer" the notches to a new pole; but it is not considered the thing to have a selection of brass tacks inserted by the shopman when buying a pole. Before putting a pole aside for the winter it is wise to go over the wood with a rag dipped in salad oil, and



Fig. 3. Köhler Horn.

to vaseline the metal work: it is not wise to hang it up in the sunshine, nor at any time to leave it lying about out of doors. The chief glory of an Otter-hunter is a well-kept and well-notched pole.

The Master will need a horn. A small Köhler horn (Fig. 3), as sold by Messrs. Swaine and Adeney (who have now acquired the business of Messrs. Köhler, formerly of Bromley), is melodious, and easily carried, while for those Masters and huntsmen who find it difficult to blow a hunting-horn there is the Köhler reed-horn (Fig. 4), as commonly

used by Masters of foot-beagles, which can be sounded by a breath. Either can be slipped into a jacket pocket or between two pieces of elastic sewn inside the coat so that the mouth protrudes from between the buttons. In either case it is well to have it attached by a cord, or it may slide into the water and prove irrecoverable. The only other weapon the Master need carry is a good hunting-knife in a sheath, with which to dismember the trophies. This should be suspended under the left armpit, and have a spring in the case to prevent



Fig. 4. Köhler Reed-horn.

it from falling out. No M.O.H. should let his hounds see him with a whip in his hands. The Secretary or one of the staff should always carry a salmon-balance, weighing from 10lb. up to 30lb. by $\frac{1}{4}$ lb., so as to record the weight of each Otter killed. The paid kennelman and whipper-in and the amateur whippers-in will carry whips: ordinary hunting-crops with thongs in brown (not white) leather will do, but the shank of the crop need not be more than two-thirds the length of a crop used mounted. The paid man should

never be without a pair of couples. In fact, if the system of hunting employed by the late Mr. James Lomax be followed (as I have elsewhere pointed out it advisedly might) in many places each member of the staff, whether paid or amateur, would be required to carry collars and couples of the pattern suggested by me to Messrs. Swaine and Adeney, which are easily portable round the waist like a belt, by means of a simple device of a button-hole punched in each collar and a strong steel stud inserted to hold them together. They can be tightened or loosened at will by means of the collar-buckle. Collars and couples for this purpose are made specially light and flexible, while strong and durable enough for use in the field.

The paid man (or the kennel-boy if he is taken out to lead the terriers) should also be supplied with one of Messrs. Edward and William Lucas's "Wallace" hunting-tools, which is made in two parts socketing together with a bayonet joint. It is spade, pick, and hammer in one, and is strong and reliable, as I have proved by personal experience. It is sold in a leather case fitted with a web-strap to sling over the shoulders, and its total weight is under 4lb. Many a weary wait while spade or pick is being sought at neighbouring farms will be obviated if this tool be always carried in the field.

It is etiquette for members of one hunt when

taking a day with another pack—a pleasant custom very common among Otter-hunters—to wear their own proper uniform. As this custom is generally adopted, and as members of defunct hunts often continue to wear their old uniforms, there are sometimes several of these seen at a meet. In order to render them easily recognisable a list of all the hunt uniforms worn up to the end of the season of 1907 is appended:—

The Argyllshire O. H.

Navy blue cap, red coat with navy blue facings, navy blue knickerbockers, navy blue stockings with rings of red round tops, red tie, gilt buttons stamped with Otter's head and letters "A. O. H."

The Border Counties (North Wales) O. H.

Dark blue cap with scarlet button and band, dark blue serge coat with scarlet facings, dark blue waistcoat with scarlet collar, dark blue knickerbockers, scarlet stockings, white stock, mother-of-pearl buttons with monogram "B. O. H."

The Bucks O. H.

Red cap, blue coat, white waistcoat, blue breeches and stockings, red tie, gilt buttons engraved "B. O. H."

Mr. L. Cameron's O. H.

White cap, crimson jacket with saffron collar, saffron waistcoat, white serge knickerbockers, crimson stockings and tie, silver buttons engraved with bonnet and cypher.

The Carlisle O. H.

Blue cap and coat, blue and white striped waistcoat, white breeches, blue stockings and tie, gilt buttons engraved "C. O. H." (The Master, Huntsman, and Hon. Whipper-in wear red coats.)

The Ceiriog O. H.

Blue cap with red peaks, blue coat, red waistcoat, blue breeches, red stockings, blue tie, gilt buttons engraved "C. O. H."

The Cheriton O. H.

White bowler hat or blue peaked cap, dark blue coat and waistcoat (the Master and Deputy-Master wear yellow waistcoats), white breeches, dark blue stockings, white tie, gilt buttons engraved "C. O. H."

Mr. Hastings Clay's O. H.

White felt bowler hat, blue coat and waistcoat with red piping, blue knickerbockers and stockings, white stock, gilt buttons engraved "C. S. O.H."

The Crowhurst O. H.

Blue double-peaked cap, blue coat with white collar, red waistcoat, white breeches, blue stockings and tie, gilt buttons engraved "C. O. H."

The Culmstock O. H.

Pot hat (white usually worn), scarlet coat and waistcoat, French grey flannel breeches, French grey woollen stockings, white hunting scarf, gilt buttons with monogram "C. O. H."

The West Cumberland O. H.

Grey cap with red band, grey coat with red collar, red waistcoat, grey breeches, grey stockings with red tops, white tie, buttons engraved "W. C. O. H."

The Dartmoor O. H.

Navy blue serge cap with "pad," navy blue serge coat, waistcoat and breeches, navy blue stockings, white stock, gilt buttons engraved "D. O. H."

Mr. David Davies' O. H.

Dark green cap and coat, red waistcoat, dark green breeches, dark green stockings with red tops, white stock, gilt buttons lettered "D. O. H."

The Dumfriesshiré O. H.

Navy blue cap and coat, crimson waistcoat, navy blue knickerbockers, navy blue stockings with crim-

son tops, white stock, silver buttons engraved "D. O. H." in Old English letters. (The Hon. Huntsman wears a scarlet coat and waistcoat.)

The East of Scotland O. H.

Blue cap and coat, scarlet waistcoat, blue breeches, blue stockings with red lines in tops, white tie, gilt buttons with letters "E. S. O. H."

The Essex O. H.

Blue cap, blue jacket with red collar, blue knickerbockers and stockings, red tie, gilt buttons engraved "E. O. H."

The Hamilton O. H.

Blue serge cap, coat, waistcoat, and breeches, blue woollen stockings, plain gilt buttons.

The Hawkstone O. H.

Scarlet cap, blue Welsh flannel coat, scarlet waistcoat, blue Welsh flannel knickerbockers, scarlet stockings and tie, gilt buttons with monogram "H. O. H."

The Kendal O. H.

Blue cap, blue coat with red facings, "K. O. H." embroidered in gold on left side of collar, red waist-

coat, blue knickerbockers and stockings, white tie, gilt buttons engraved "K. O. H."

The King's O. H.

Dark green cap, dark green coat with white collar, primrose waistcoat, dark green knickerbockers and stockings.

The Lake District O. H.

Blue Welsh serge cap and coat (with yellow collar for hunt officials), yellow waistcoat, blue Welsh serge breeches, blue stockings and tie, gilt buttons engraved "L. D. O. H."

Mr. T. P. Lewes' O. H.

Red cap, blue serge coat, red waistcoat, blue serge breeches, blue stockings, red tie, buttons engraved "L. O. H."

The Milton O. H.

Dark green cap, dark green coat with cerise collar and cuffs, green breeches and stockings, gilt buttons engraved "M. O. H."

The Norfolk O. H.

Red cap, blue Norfolk jacket with red collar, blue waistcoat and breeches, red stockings, white tie, gilt buttons engraved "N. O. H."

The Northern Counties O. H.

Blue cap and coat, red waistcoat, blue knickerbockers and stockings, buttons with monogram "N. C. O. H." (The Huntsman wears a red coat.)

The Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire O. H.

Blue cap and coat, red waistcoat, blue breeches, blue stockings with red tops, white tie, gilt buttons engraved "P. C. O. H."

The Rûg O. H.

Dark blue cap, coat, waistcoat, breeches, stockings, and tie, gilt buttons engraved "R. O. H."

The Tetcott O. H.

Blue serge cap, coat, and waistcoat, white serge breeches, blue stockings and tie, gilt buttons engraved "T. O. H."

Mr. Courtenay Tracy's O. H.

Green double-peaked cap, green coat and waistcoat, white serge breeches, green stockings, scarlet tie, gilt buttons with monogram "C. T. O. H."

The Wharfedale O. H.

Navy blue cap, navy blue coat with red collar, red waistcoat, navy blue breeches, navy blue stockings with red tops, gilt buttons.

Mr. W. C. Yates' O. H.

Blue double-peaked cap with pad (the mounting engraved "Y. O. H."), blue coat, orange waistcoat, blue breeches and stockings, gilt buttons with monogram "Y. O. H." in relief.

The Ynysfor O. H.

Dark brown cap with blue band and button, dark brown coat with blue collar, blue waistcoat, dark brown breeches, blue stockings, bronze buttons engraved "Y. O. & F. H."

CHAPTER VIII.

THE HUNT SERVANTS.

THE hunt servants of a pack of Otter-hounds usually consist of "a man and a boy." Some packs add a first or second whipper-in (paid), while others are content with a single-handed man, with a boy to give intermittent help at kennels.

The work required of the adult hunt servant to Otter-hounds is consequently of a varied character. He has to act as kennelman and feeder at home, and as whipper-in and sometimes as huntsman in the field. The kennel-boy will assist him at home, and if taken out hunting will lead the terriers where these are not allowed to run with the pack, carry the "Wallace" hunting-tool, and be armed with a short crop so that he can act as an emergency whipper-in, and help the kennelman to take hounds home or to exercise them. Such a boy will earn from five to ten shillings a week, according to his age and experience. He should be active and intelligent, able to ride a bicycle, and imbued with a love for his employment and a desire to rise in it;

as, if he is civil and obliging, fond of hounds, and anxious to learn and to perform his duties well, advancing manhood will enable him to do.

The kennelman to Otter-hounds rejoices in various official names. With some packs he is called "huntsman," with others "kennel-huntsman," with yet others "kennelman and whipper-in," or some combination of these. As most Masters of Otter-hounds also carry the horn—and, indeed, it is a little difficult to see why they are Masters unless they do so—and most packs are whipped-in by amateurs, perhaps the most descriptive, if not the briefest, title for the paid hand is that of "kennelman and whipper-in."

Of his duties in the hunting-field I have written something in the chapter on "The Whippers-in." Where there are no amateur whippers-in, or but one (who is behind the Master and huntsman), all that has been written about the forward whip will apply to him during a hunt. In any case, he will be ahead of the Master, and his principal business will be to keep hounds back and regulate their progress to that of the Master. If he is accustomed to hunt hounds himself in the Master's absence, this will be no easy task, as they will be continually trying to go on ahead of him, confused by the sudden change in his office. It is a bad plan to allow the "kennelman and whipper-in" to hunt



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A useful type of Hound Van.



hounds at all—the Deputy-Master should take the huntsman's place when the Master is not present. The frequent change of attitude towards him required on the part of hounds who one day regard him as the whipper-in, whom they should fear more than love, and the next as their huntsman, whom they should love more than fear, cannot but be bad for the discipline of a well-ordered pack. Where the paid man is hunting the hounds, too, it is probable that he will have insufficient assistance in the whipping-in department. Consequently he will be afraid of hounds getting away from him, with the result that he will keep them all together like a flock of sheep—first on one bank and then on another—and the sport will necessarily suffer.

The great temptation to which the young whipper-in—one just promoted from kennel-lad—succumbs is that of rating hounds when they don't need it and of constantly clipping into them with the whip. Good hounds should not require to be struck with the lash at all. If they do not obey the rate, a crack of the whip, not a stroke of the lash, should make them attend. To strike a hound (who may have been hanging behind, or even speaking to a rabbit or a moorhen, but who leaves it on hearing the whipper-in's rate) as he comes galloping past to rejoin the huntsman, is not only stupid, but criminal.

Yet how often one sees it done by old as well as young whippers-in, by professionals as well as by amateurs! If a young hound has been well rated, called, and still refuses to obey the huntsman's voice and horn, the whipper-in should go to him where he is "babbling" at the mouth of a rabbit-burrow or what-not, and if he can get close enough and behind him while the hound is in the act of "rioting," should hit him hard once with a "'ware rabbit," "leave it," or "get on to him," uttered simultaneously with the stroke. To strike at and miss him, and go plunging about among the undergrowth in order to get a second chance, is worse than useless, and only teaches young hounds how to dodge an incompetent whipper-in. I have known a whipper-in of this sort to keep hounds constantly making "music" (to match that of his own voice) along five miles of river. Needless to say, no "drag" was spoken to, and no Otter found all the way.

If such a whipper-in is not amenable to verbal reprimand, his whip should be taken away and he made to work without it. If that does not take it out of both his voice and his legs there is nothing for it but to draft him. He has probably mistaken his vocation, and might do better as a stock-rider on some Otter-less prairie.

In kennels the duties of the kennelman do not

differ materially from those required of hunt servants of other hounds. They have been dealt with by many readily-accessible authorities. Captain Percy Williams's advice to Tom Firr to "stay at home with his hounds and wear a white neckcloth" is just as full of wisdom and just as applicable to the kennelman of Otter-hounds as it was when spoken to a huntsman of foxhounds.

Our kennelman and whipper-in, or whatever we choose to entitle him, must be active, strong, not subject to rheumatism, have a good, musical voice, be a good runner—at times he will have to go as fast as, or faster than, a huntsman of foot-harriers—and an energetic man who never tires. Like his hounds, the taller he is the better, since he will be able to wade where a smaller man would be beaten. I do not think it essential that he should be a swimmer, or, at any rate, that he should be encouraged to swim during a hunt. A powerful swimmer usually takes risks which an indifferent swimmer or a man who cannot swim would avoid. Moreover, swimming tires both men and hounds more than anything else. Where the water is too big for wading it is usually much too big for hunting.

A good man in kennels is the principal thing to be sought for in a kennelman of Otter-hounds. If he is a good man with hounds and brings them punctu-

ally to the meet fit and well the Master and huntsman should be satisfied. A pleasant, civil manner, with a necessary reserve in the matter of kennel secrets, is a great advantage. Habits of early rising, punctuality, personal cleanliness, and order are of supreme importance, and, of course, sobriety. The Field will always be apt to proffer generous hospitality to hunt servants, and much harm is sometimes unthinkingly done to them in this way. I have no great belief in a teetotal kennelman, but he should know his own capacity, and be able to refuse as well as to take his drink like a man. Otter-hunting is a trying pursuit physically, and on a hot summer day refreshment is an actual necessity of the chase. If he makes a rule of not touching spirits of any sort until he has got hounds fed and kennelled-up, and confines himself to beer or cider or shandygaff during the day in strictly moderate quantities, he will be a wise man and come to no harm.

It should be the business of the Master, or the Secretary, or the Committee to see that the kennelman is supplied with such newspapers and other literature as deal with the subjects of hounds and hunting, and encouraged in every way to study his profession and take an interest in what is being done by other packs and by Masters and breeders of hounds everywhere.

The wages of a kennelman will vary from 18s. to 25s. a week, with uniform and *brogues*, or boots. It is best to provide him with a residence at the kennels and to pay him a sufficient wage, and to discourage suggestions for taking a cap for the hunt servants at kills or upon some other occasion—as is done, without corresponding results of a beneficial character, in some hunts.

CHAPTER IX.

THE MASTER AND THE DEPUTY- MASTER.

IN this chapter especially, although I have pursued the idea throughout the book, I shall treat the Master of Otter-hounds as being the huntsman of the pack. In some few packs these offices have, I know, been separated, and the Master occupies, like the majority of M.M.F.H., a merely ornamental position "with the right of veto." In one such hunt a peer figures as "Honorary Master," and there are also a Master and a huntsman. But this is an exceptional occurrence. In most cases the man who takes the position of M.O.H. does so chiefly for the purpose of hunting hounds himself. And rightly so: for in this pleasure—to a true sportsman perhaps the greatest of temporal joys—must rest the only compensation for the real hard work, the major and minor worries, the constant strain of efficient supervision, the expenditure of time, and perhaps—though it is hardly fair that this should be—of money also, which are found necessary to ensure that his hounds and his

followers shall enjoy the sport which they go out for to seek, when and wherever they do so.

One first and principal thing is required of a Master of Otter-hounds: that he shall show sport. If he does this, and does it, moreover, at the time and in the places most convenient and agreeable to the various classes of his subscribers, and to those owners and lessees of land and water by whose courtesy alone he is enabled to hunt at all, nothing else matters very much. Territorial magnate-ism, social position, and the possession of a stake in the county are not of the importance in a Master of Otter-hounds that they are to him who would aspire to master a pack of staghounds, foxhounds, or even harriers. Neither, fortunately, is the possession of a long purse. As I shall show later on, the average cost of keeping and hunting a pack of hounds fifteen couples strong works out at £300 a year; and it is a very poor country that should not be able to provide subscribers of sufficient money to cover this expenditure for any Master who shows them sport, without requiring him to put his hand in his pocket for more than his personal expenses. Nevertheless, if that class described somewhat indefinitely as "the right sort of people" is to support the Hunt and be seen in the field, the Master must be a man of some family, influence, and position. Where it is otherwise, and someone vaguely spoken of as "the

wrong man ” gets the hounds, the “ right people ” will not turn out to his support. This is the chance for the “ bounders ” and “ wrong ’uns ” of the district, who promptly rally to his assistance, assume the functions of whippers-in and other official positions, don the uniform, and by their offensive behaviour both in the hunting field and out of it still further alienate true sportsmen and bring Otter-hunting into undeserved contempt. Happily, instances of this sort are rare, if not quite unknown, in the history of Otter-hunting ; but it is distinctly a danger to be guarded against in the democratic future, with “ Spurious Sports ” Bills and other weapons of the unjust threatening to interfere with legitimate enjoyment in the hunting-field.

Many of the finest and most successful Masters of Otter-hounds have been drawn from the squirarchy of the West of England, as such surnames as Trelawny, Bulteel, Collier, Cheriton, Calmady, and Courtenay Tracy are convenient to prove. From the same class in the North came Mr. James Lomax ; while the corresponding class in Highland Scotland has provided such present-day Masters as Mr. L. Rose, of the Essex, and Mr. Muir Stewart, of the Argyllshire. On the other hand, it must not be forgotten that hunting of all sorts is not, and must never be permitted to become, the prerogative of the rich or the well-born. In these days everyone has to

pay for his sport, whether he be the lessee of a deer forest or a Birmingham working-man angler: the age of free fox-hunting, as of free golf, is past. Every man who subscribes to an Otter-hunt or submits to be capped has a right to follow the hounds: and provision is made for all in nearly every hunt by a sliding scale of subscriptions, ranging from half a guinea upwards, the larger sums entitling to such privileges as the receipt of cards of the fixtures, the right to wear badges, hunt buttons, or the uniform, or to eligibility for holding office and having a voice in the conduct of the hunt.

But although much may be forgiven to the M.O.H. of the "right sort" who shows sport, there are many additional qualities necessary to him if he is to be a really popular Master. Tact, temper, manners, and that indefinable gift *bon-homie* should be his. He should reserve his snubs for those whom the hunt would really be better without, and administer them with much discretion. To the well-meaning but ignorant he must listen with as much patience and apparent deference as to the oldest and most trusted member of the hunt. At the meet he will hear from many lips stories of the local prevalence of Otters: extraordinary stories they will prove too. One lady will tell him that her brothers, fishing a favourite pool on the previous day, were occupied for hours in stoning off a large

dog-Otter that persisted in taking the preserved prawns off their hooks. Another knows of a nest of young Otters in a tree-top three miles up-stream. A third will tell him that a certain island—generally in her own homeward direction—“ simply swarms ” with Otters. I have been told all these tales and many as absurd in perfect good faith. Nor are the men much better. Keepers will have seen two Otters fighting in broad daylight; boys will say that an Otter has climbed into their father’s punt and attacked them savagely; the miller has had several playing about on his lawn for weeks past; and the number that the average angler sees in a season would stock all the rivers in the land! Most of all these good people are not deliberately lying: they simply do not know an Otter when they see it, and would probably not see one if it were present.

But the Master must listen to all these efforts of the imagination without any appearance of scepticism, if he would not make enemies galore. Some such answer as “ Well, we’ll try and find him for you to-day,” or “ Good! we must thin ’em out a bit,” or something polite and non-committal of this sort, will usually meet the case. But he will be lucky if he do not get an absolutely blank day if there are many such narratives current at the meet. The Otter is proverbially shy, and, wisely careful of his reputation, seems to dislike being “ talked

about." You are apt to find that he has left the district in which the tongue of rumour has busied itself with his exploits, and gone to some place "out of the draw" where garrulity and fiction are less rife.

Seriously, I have found that where there is much talk of Otters having been seen, and especially when they are reported to have done abnormal things, all is not well in the locality; and a little further enquiry will usually elicit more authentic information of Otters having been trapped or shot—facts which these elaborate inventions have been contrived to conceal.

This trapping or shooting of Otters is one of the worst of the annoyances with which the Master will have to deal. In some cases the syndicate of un-sporting stockbrokers or linendrapers who have taken and stocked a stretch of water are the culprits; and he will have his work cut out to teach these ignoramuses that Otters in moderation are their best friends, owing to their destruction of the enemies of fish spawn and fish food, and that his hounds are sufficient to ensure the "moderation." At the same time he should endeavour to impress them with the fact that the passage of hounds along a stream need not necessarily cause them to abandon angling for the rest of the day and retire to the nearest inn to drink confusion to Otter-hunting. I remember

once encountering a sour-faced angler, scowling at the hounds which had compelled him temporarily to reel-up, and found, on enquiry, that although he had been fishing since 7 a.m. (it was then noon) he had not had a rise. I advised him to try again after we had gone on, and, returning by the river bank some two hours later, found him rejoicing over a nice basket of seven fat trout, whose capture he was honest enough to attribute (correctly) to the fact that hounds had stirred up the bottom and set the fish on the feed. Of course, where an Otter is put down and hunted on the exact stretch of water which Piscator is fishing, he will have perforce to abandon his angling; but if he be a true disciple of Izaak Walton he will do so gladly to enjoy the pleasures of the chase, and perhaps, like his master, will learn to "love all Otter-hunters" ever after.

The real reason why Otters are trapped and shot is that some drinking keepers and poaching farmers' sons know that they can get a few shillings for the carcase at the nearest "bird-stuffer's" shop. Here the remedy is to a certain extent in the hands of the Master and the members of the hunt. The former should make a point of visiting all the professional taxidermists in his country, and impressing upon them that if he hears of their purchasing or setting-up any Otters that have not been killed by hounds he will neither send his own trophies, nor permit any

members or followers of his hunt to whom he may present such to send them, to be set up by the delinquent.

There are many taxidermists—such as Mr. Robert Raine, 26, Botchergate, Carlisle—who, being excellent craftsmen, are also thorough sportsmen, and would refuse to have anything to do with an Otter that had been otherwise than legitimately destroyed. Craftsmen like these can be the best friends of the Master by letting him know at once when an Otter has been trapped and by whom. But there are, it is to be feared, others who are not so conscientious, persons akin to the many game dealers in Scotland, as well as in England, who maintain on regular wages gangs of game and salmon poachers, by the depredations of which they prosper, but who are secure from the penalty of fine or imprisonment or forfeiture of licence that their ill-paid dupes incur when captured. In these cases the appeal must be made to the purse. If they cannot see that the profit made by setting up the trophies of twenty or thirty hunted Otters is greater than that to be derived from dealing with half a dozen illegitimately killed, then, as most Otter-hunters are also anglers or shooting men, or both, let these procure their tackle and cartridges elsewhere than from the local taxidermist who usually supplies them, and he will soon wish he had favoured the sportsman rather than the poacher.

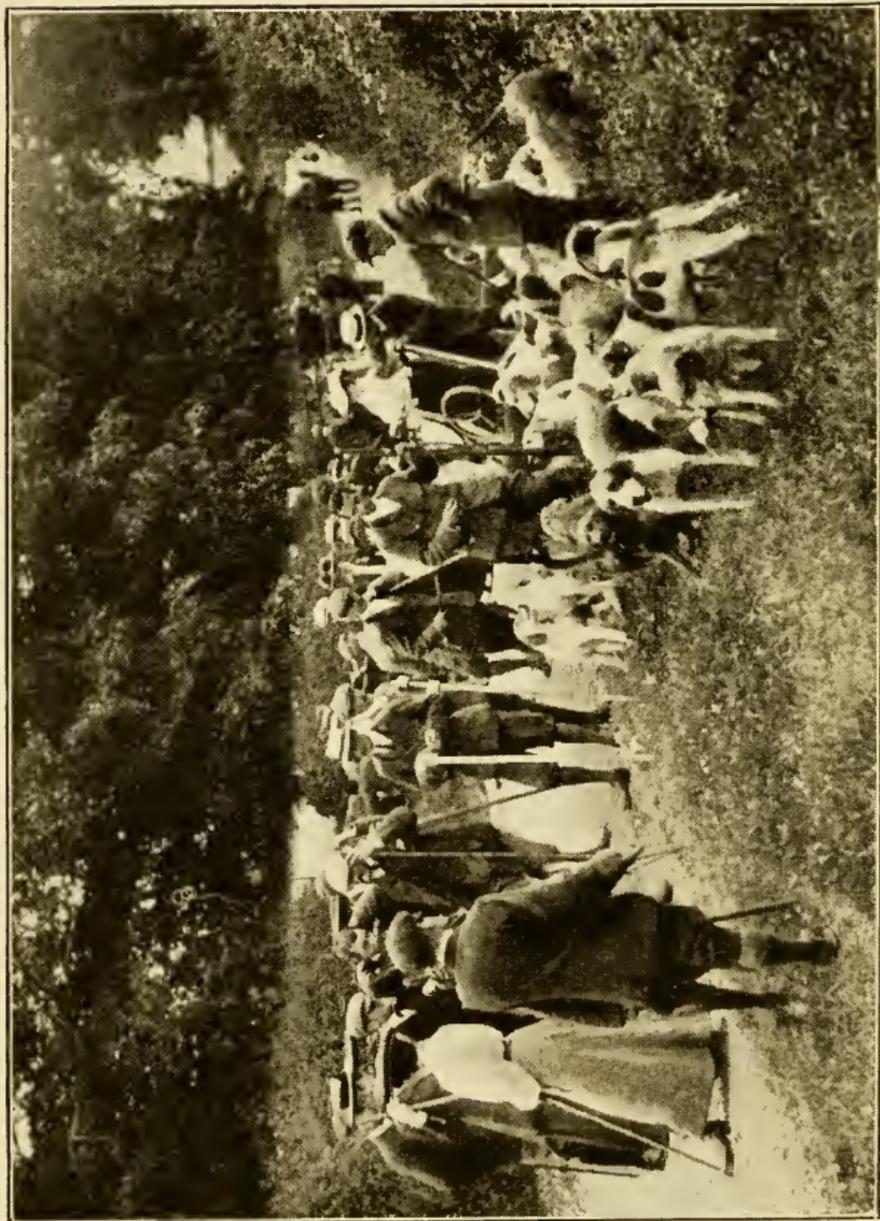
Another thorn in the side of the Master will be the irresponsible and ill-informed local scribe. He will most usually get reports of the hunts that take place incorrigibly wrong, and it is too late when the paper is picked up in the library on Saturday night to swear at the "cursèd penny-a-liner." The "penny-a-liner," like the pianist, "is doing his best," and does not deserve to be shot, even by merely verbal bullets. He would be only too glad to know that the Master or the Hon. Secretary would give him the information if he were to come to headquarters in quest of it. Let him be encouraged to do so. Answer his inquiries if he is present after a hunt, or his letter if he writes for particulars. Jot down the facts, and leave him to lick them into shape if you are not a "man of letters" yourself. If he calls to collect the information, offer him a bite or a sup or a smoke, as the case may be, and give him the facts. In this way you will escape being called "a huntsman bold" or a "jovial Master," and will be spared seeing your hounds described as "dogs" or the Otter as "poor puss" or a "felon." You will also be able to prevent the circulation of those "Otter stories" which sometimes find their way into the columns of the London "yellow Press" and do no possible good to Otter-hunting. It almost seems as though some of the minor fry of journalism have deter-

mined to repair the omissions of the great fabulists and supply the ha'penny Press with up-to-date fables as to the doings of the Otter.

Even the *soi-distant* serious articles on the Otter that sometimes appear are no less inaccurate and un-sportsmanlike, what they lack in knowledge being compensated by sheer imagination. For instance, a writer recently advised the readers of a London morning journal to climb into a pollard tree to windward (*sic*) of an Otter's holt, in order to watch "papa Otter" catching fish and bringing them to feed his children. Incidentally, he mentioned that the Otter and the water-rat (*sic*) are "amphibious," and endowed the former with a fixed "home" like "the fox and the har', the badger and the b'ar" of nursery poetry. This sort of pabulum is of no conceivable service to natural knowledge; but it may do a great deal of harm to the prospects of sport by sending its dupes among the "half educated" to search the banks of rivers and streams for a sight of the Otter family disporting itself at the entrance of its holt. These people are not in the least likely to see any Otters or even to discover a holt; but by tramping about the banks and tainting them they are certain to cause any Otters on the stream to go elsewhere, and so spoil the chances of a hunt when hounds come. Such writers as the one above quoted and the authors of magazine articles of the North

American school of wild-life fiction—fundamentally unscientific in its attribution of human qualities to non-human beasts—were better advised to lay aside their pens and to hunt seriously with a good pack of Otter-hounds for fifteen or twenty years, by which time they might hope, with luck, to have picked up some at least of the rudiments of sport, and possibly of natural history also. They are almost as trying to an M.O.H. as the thoughtless young men who, having heard that hounds are coming to draw the streams near them during the following week, promptly take a few alleged terriers and try all the drains and holts in the neighbourhood “to see if there is any chance of a find when hounds come.” Their pet dogs do not “bolt” the Otters, but they taint the drains and holts for a fortnight to come, with the result that the Otters leave next evening, and a “blank” day is the ultimate result. I recently overheard a youth who had been at this game abusing hounds as “no good,” because they failed to find in a drain where he was certain there were Otters two days ago, as his dogs “had been barkin’ at them for hours”! As in other departments of life, the Master of Otter-hounds will find that his most heart-breaking troubles come from the “fools” rather than from the “knaves.”

There will be troubles, too, arising in kennels



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A Meet of the Essex Otter-Hounds.

[W. J. Abrey, Tonbridge.

from time to time, apart altogether from the management of hounds, which, if they cannot be composed by tact, must be dealt with promptly, firmly, and with decision. With his committee, too, in the case of a subscription pack, causes of annoyance are likely to arise, but here the Master should, when taking office, have placed himself in a sufficiently strong position to disregard any cantankerous members until he shall face them at the annual general meeting at the end of the season. Causes of disagreement are bound to arise from time to time, and had better be met as they arise rather than anticipated and worried over beforehand. But perhaps we have dealt sufficiently with the troubles likely to beset the Master of Otter-hounds: there are pleasures, as he will find, that far outweigh the pains.

The Master's position in the field is defined in the chapters on the actual hunting of the Otter. Here we have merely to deal with him in his relation to the hunt, as represented by the committee, and in connection with the management of kennels.

To take the last first, it may be laid down as an axiom that one of the first points in a successful tenure of the Mastership of Otter-hounds is that the M.O.H. should live in almost constant touch with his hounds. The man who only meets hounds on

hunting days during the season, and never sees them from October to March, save for an occasional Sunday afternoon on the flags and at the annual puppy-judging, will not show the same quality of sport as the man who is with his hounds almost daily, and who is associated in their minds with their feeding and exercise as well as with their sport.

The really keen M.O.H. will live within a short distance of his kennels, where the noise of hounds "singing" in the morning will gladden his heart—if it break his rest—as do the chanted words "All's well" from the look-out man on an ocean liner at midnight. He should be in kennels daily, if possible, and see hounds fed—at least so often that they come to associate him as much with the feeding-trough as they do with the horn. But let them never see him with a whip in his hands. Let him slip a kennel coat over his clothes and allow them to paw and caress him as they please, while he speaks to, fondles, and makes much of them in return. His should be the voice that calls them by name into the feeding-room, and while doing so he must see that on mentioning their names some officious kennel-boy does not hit them a rap with a kennel-crop to send them to his call. Indeed, the use of the whip in kennels is to be deprecated, and the men should rather carry couples in its place.

The oftener the Master can be with hounds at exercise the better, especially when getting them ready for their season's work. Only so can he form an opinion of their fitness and condition. If he goes with them on the roads the kennelman is then in his proper place as whipper-in; the boy can be left at home to do some of the hundred-and-one odd jobs that will otherwise be neglected; and the contingency of the kennelman employing his wife or daughter to whip-in to him at exercise will be happily avoided.

And here I may say in parenthesis, and without intention of being ungallant, that whatever may be the case with foxhounds, harriers, and beagles, lady Masters of Otter-hounds are as completely out of place as would be a lady Primate of All England. No lady can actually *hunt* a pack of Otter-hounds, and her functions, therefore, in the field are simply those of a Field Master, whose duties a man—with the command of a rough tongue when necessary—can discharge more excellently.

The Master, if things are to run smoothly, should be an autocrat in kennels as he is commander-in-chief in the hunting field. A divided control in either of these spheres of his duty will prove in the long run fatal to sport. The business of a committee is primarily to select the fittest man who proffers himself for the post of Master, and secon-

darily to supply him with the money he has agreed to accept, on the dates fixed for payment. There its duties should end, until the members become dissatisfied with the conduct of the Master or the quality of the sport he is showing, when they have one plain duty to perform, and that is to request him to resign.

The wise course for a Master-elect to pursue is to strike a clear bargain before taking over the reins of office. Unless it is a case of the hunt failing for lack of financial support—when it would probably be better for it to cease and leave room for the formation of a fresh hunt—and the consequent necessity of finding a well-to-do Master who shall maintain the pack out of his own pocket, the intending Master should decide for what sum he will be able to hunt the country, and ask the committee to guarantee this before anything further is done. He should then, if the kennels and hounds are the property of the committee, agree to rent the former and to purchase the latter at a valuation, so as to have them entirely within his own control. Whether he actually pays cash for them or merely enters into an agreement to hand over a pack of hounds of equal value (or make good any difference) on relinquishing the Mastership is a matter of little moment. Out of whatever guaranteed subscription he agrees to hunt the country for a stipulated number of days

per season, he will have to defray all expenses of every sort, except the maintenance in repair of kennels, which are the property of the committee, who, as the landlord, will naturally do this and pay the taxes on their property.

As the Master's personal expenses in hunting hounds will necessarily exceed the sum it would cost him to hunt with two or three packs in a season, there is, or should be, no reason why he should dip further into his private purse in order to show his subscribers sport. If new hounds are required, he will, under the above conditions, purchase them himself, reimbursing himself from the profits (if any) of breeding and selling hounds. If additional kennel accommodation, a new hound van, or any extra of this sort is desirable, and the committee agree as to its necessity, it is best to raise a separate fund for the purpose, a slightly increased rental being charged to the Master, in order to cover the interest on capital employed.

As in the case of the majority of foxhound packs, the Master's subscription should be paid half-yearly in advance, since it is unfair to ask the man who is showing sport to draw upon his private account for expenditure in the interests of his subscribers. Taking all the work and worry into account, the average M.O.H. gets nothing but the honour, such as it is, represented by these initials and the actual

pleasure of breeding and hunting hounds : and for this he further disburses any sum between £50 and £100 in personal expenses, train fares, hotel bills, carriage hire, tips, and so forth, which otherwise he would not have to spend. It is obviously not fair to ask him to provide the capital to carry on the hunt in addition, and to wait until a tardy secretary shall have found time to collect overdue subscriptions before he can be reimbursed.

It is evident, therefore, that the man who aspires to become a Master of Otter-hounds must have some private income, sufficient at any rate to maintain himself in that position in life to which he belongs and to defray his extra-private expenses during the hunting season. The man of little means, who takes all the subscriptions he can get and keeps himself as well as the hounds out of the sum received, or is privately supported by some unwise but generous member of the hunt, is not in reality a Master of Hounds, but merely the paid servant of every subscriber, or at least of his generous but misguided friend. In such a case sport will suffer, hounds deteriorate, and the eventual disintegration of the hunt is practically assured.

There are different ways in which the intending Master may estimate the probable cost of hunting a country, so as to know, approximately, for what subscribed sum he may venture to undertake the

Mastership. One method is to fix a sum per hunting-day, which will, of course, vary with the size of the hunt territory, facilities for railway travelling, lying-out, and so on. In one country £5 per hunting day may suffice; an £8 basis should more than cover the most extravagant. Thus, taking an average of ten hunting days a month for five months, or fifty hunting days, at the lower rate £250 and at the higher rate £400 should cover the total annual expenditure. As a rule, with hounds stopped for mowing-grass or by flood, a 15-couple pack will hardly do fifty days in a season, even at "two days a week and an occasional bye," nor will £6 be too little a sum to set against the expenses. Thus for £300 such a pack should be comfortably maintained without "crabbing" its chances of showing sport.

In order still further to elucidate the point as to the cost of keeping Otter-hounds, I have submitted a number of balance-sheets of various packs, taken almost at hazard, to a member of one of the most distinguished firms of chartered accountants in London, who has been kind enough to analyse six of the most recent balance-sheets (those of the seasons 1905 and 1906), representing six different hunts in widely-different parts of the kingdom—north, south, east, and west—ranging from 15 to 20 couples in strength, and including hunts

Summary of Balance Sheets of Six Otter Hunts for Seasons 1905 and 1906.

	1. S. 16 Couples, Season 1905.		2. N. 20 Couples, Season 1905-6.		3. N.W. 20 Couples, Season 1906.		4. Mid. 18 Couples, Season 1906.		Total, Four Hunts.		5. S. E. 15 Couples, Season 1905.		6. S. W. 15 Couples, Season 1905.		Total, Six Hunts.	
	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.	£	s. d.
Cost of Keep of Hounds...	99	19 3	102	6 5	67	2 1	152	17 4	422	5 1	—	—	—	—	—	—
Wages	69	12 0	70	18 4	101	18 0	104	0 0	346	8 4	—	—	—	—	—	—
Upkeep of Kennels	26	0 4	35	7 8	17	7 6	41	8 0	118	3 6	—	—	8	10 0	—	—
Rent of Kennels	84	14 2	84	10 11	87	4 0	189	12 10	446	1 11	—	—	—	—	—	—
Hunting Expenses	12	14 1	17	11 9	2	5 4	5	0 0	37	11 2	—	—	—	—	—	—
Veterinary and Chemist... ..	13	19 11	12	9 6	12	18 0	24	18 10	64	6 3	4	2 7	4	16 6	—	—
Printing and Stamps	17	12 7	34	6 4	22	6 8	13	10 0	87	15 7	—	—	—	—	—	—
Insurance, Rates, Taxes, Dog Licences, &c.	—	—	13	10 0	—	—	—	—	13	10 0	—	—	3	10 0	—	—
Badges and Prizes	1	13 6	—	—	6	6 0	—	—	7	19 6	—	—	—	—	—	—
Huntsman's Clothes... ..	—	—	3	0 0	—	—	3	0 0	6	0 0	—	—	—	—	—	—
Damage	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Master	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—	—
Total Cost of Maintenance	326	5 10	372	0 11	317	7 7	534	7 0	1550	1 4	304	2 7	241	16 6	2096	0 5

	Total and Average Cost of Keep of Hounds.				Average Wages per Ann. and per Week.		Total and Average Cost per Couple.		
	No. of Couples.	Amnt. per Ann.	Am. p. Couple per Week.	s. d.	No. of Kennelmen.	Total Wages.	No. of Couples.	Total Cost.	Total Cost per Couple.
1. S.	16	£ 100	6 5 0	2 5	1½	£ 70	16	£ 326	£ s. d. 20 7 6
2. N.	20	102	5 0 0	2 0	1½	70	20	372	18 12 0
3. N.W.	20	67	3 7 0	1 4	2	102	20	317	15 17 4
4. Mid.	18	153	8 10 0	3 3	2	104	18	534	29 14 4
	74	422	Aver. 5 14 0	Aver. 2 4	7	346	74	1549	Aver. 20 18 8
5. S.E.	15	—	—	—	—	—	15	304	20 5 6
6. S.W.	15	—	—	—	—	—	15	242	16 2 6
	104	—	—	—	—	—	104	2095	Aver. 20 0 0

run on economical lines as well as those more extravagantly conducted.

I think this very cleverly-made summary and analysis will be of considerable service to intending Masters of Otter-hounds, and therefore print it in full on page 104. It will be seen that the average cost for keep of hounds works out at less than half-a-crown per couple per week, that wages are just under £1 a week per man, and that hunting expenses and sundries average just over £100 a year; so that the total cost for a 15-couple pack is exactly £300 per annum, or £20 per couple per annum. These figures, taken from actual balance-sheets by a skilled professional accountant, may be confidently relied upon, confirmed as they are by the sum per hunting-day estimate previously given. It is interesting in this connection to compare "Stonehenge's" (1878) estimate for the maintenance of Otter-hounds, which he gives at 3s. a couple for keep of hounds and from 14s. to 18s. a week for huntsmen's wages. Since then wages have risen, but hound-food is cheaper, so that at the end of thirty years, thanks to various factors, our sport need cost us neither less nor more.

The Master has only one duty in the field, namely, to hunt hounds; and that part of his work will be more fitly dealt with in the chapter on "The Science of Hunting the Otter." But there is one

important duty of a Master of Otter-hounds during the off-season, and that is to cultivate friendly relations with all the proprietors of water and with the millers and farmers in his country. He can visit some of the rivers he hunts in summer, walk along the banks, keeping an eye open for signs that Otters are working the stream as he goes, and look in upon the merry miller to pass the time of day and exchange a little gossip with him. Further on, perhaps, he will light upon a riverside farmer, and enter into a friendly conversation with him on the price of stock or the prospects of the lambing season. The proprietor of the next stretch of water may be a keen angler, and the Master will turn aside to pay an afternoon call and smoke a pipe or play a game at billiards with him. An occasional visit to the market ordinary and a friendly chat with its frequenters will serve to keep them interested in the sport: and the Master will do well, though not an angler, to support the local angling clubs, subscribe to their re-stocking funds, and attend their annual dinners, where a useful "word in season" may often be spoken in defence of Otter-hunting. An Otter-hunter who is himself a fisherman has a great pull over the non-angling man when it comes to protesting against trap and shot-gun. In this way the Master will keep in touch with his best friends all the year round; and

if he be possessed of that tact and *bonhomie* of which I have spoken elsewhere, he will have few enemies and the sport of which he is an exponent still fewer. Where these are unavoidable, he must have patience and hope for better things, remembering always that where a cantankerous individual or a faddist closes his water to hounds it is wiser to order hounds off yourself than to have them ordered off by an impertinent underling; and that if regard be habitually shown to the wishes of the proprietor he is more likely to relent in favour of the sport than if they be defied and set at naught.

He may, however, find it useful—in England especially—to issue some such circular as that appended in order to mitigate in some degree the undoubted nuisance that motor-cars may (unregulated) become, at meets of Otter-hounds more particularly.

Suggested Regulations to be Issued to Motorists Attending Meets of Otter-hounds.

Members of the Hunt who come to the Meets in motor-cars are requested to observe, and to instruct their chauffeurs to observe, the following regulations :—

1. When *meeting* hounds to stop dead and allow hounds to get well past before re-starting the car.

2. When *overtaking* hounds to give the Hunt servants ample warning of approach, and to slow down to a speed not exceeding two miles an hour until clear of the pack.

3. When *going to a Meet* to travel by a road which hounds are not likely to use.

4. When *returning home after hunting* to get away before hounds, and, if possible, to use a road by which hounds are not going to travel.

5. Not to bring their cars within 100 yards of hounds at a Meet.

6. Not to bring their cars within 100 yards of any river that is being hunted by hounds until the Hunt shall have passed up or down stream; and not to cross any bridge until hounds have passed over or under it.

7. To exercise extreme care that waste petrol, fumes, &c., are not discharged in the vicinity of hounds or on the roads over which they have to pass, and that no dust is raised immediately in front of them, especially when preceding the pack to a Meet.

8. Where there is some little distance to be traversed from the Meet to the waterside, to remember that Otter-hunting is a sport pursued on foot, and that followers on foot must take precedence, horsed vehicles following and motor-cars bringing up in all cases the extreme rear.

9. When wearing the Hunt uniform while motor-ing to or from a Meet, to exhibit the utmost con-sideration towards all persons using the roads, whether these are fellow-members of the Hunt, land-owners, riparian proprietors, farmers, millers, or the general public.

10. To induce non-hunting motorists of their acquaintance to observe the same rules when in the vicinity of hounds.

In this way only can members who are motorists hope to combat the conviction of many subscribers that the bringing of cars to Meets of Otter-hounds is detrimental to the best interests of the sport.

(Signed)

MASTER OF THE ——— O. .

The Deputy-Master is simply the Master's under-study, in so far as he should be ready at any time to perform any of the Master's duties in the event of his involuntary absence through illness or any other cause. Thus he will be prepared to hunt hounds for him, or to supervise the kennels, to attend sales and purchase hounds and terriers at the Master's request. The Master will necessarily take him into his confidence on details of kennel-management, place him in full possession of his ideas, and rely upon being backed up loyally by him

in every way. The position of "understudy" on the stage is, I am told, a somewhat depressing one; and it may be made much the same in the hunting-field. For his own sake as well as for that of his Deputy, the wise Master will occasionally resign the horn to the Deputy-Master—whom I presume to be of his own selection and appointment—and will, in the same way, invite him to preside at feeding-time in kennels, visit the puppy-walkers, and generally prepare himself in due time to succeed to the Mastership. The "part" of Deputy-Master may be "doubled" with that of Field-Master, when the Master or Secretary will assume the duties of the last-named official on days when the Deputy-Master carries the horn.

CHAPTER X.

THE WHIPPERS-IN.

FOR certain reasons the men who whip-in to a pack of Otter-hounds will for the most part be amateurs and subscribing members of the hunt who perform the duties for the love of the thing. In the first place, more whippers-in are required in Otter-hunting than in other forms of the chase, no fewer than four being necessary under some circumstances and if they know their work: if not, they were better absent. In the second place, the funds available rarely allow of the employment of more than one paid hand in the field, who is also the kennelman when at home.

The Master or the Committee will choose them for two principal reasons—keenness and obedience to orders. A slack whipper-in who spends his time when hounds are on a drag in flirting with the lady members should be deposed; a whipper-in who exercises any judgment at variance with that delivered (rightly or wrongly) by the Master should be awarded unlimited “cells.”

On a drag the whippers-in will occupy the following positions on either side of the stream that is hunted. The forward whipper-in, who is the most important, will be in advance of the Master who is hunting hounds. Behind the Master on the same side of the stream a second whipper-in will bring on the tail-hounds, stop riot, and keep the Field in order in the absence of Field-Master or Secretary. He must be a man with a good knowledge of the habits of Otters, and capable of judging of the reliability of each hound, or he will sometimes make the error of "putting" on a hound who is in reality "marking" an Otter that the pack has passed. This applies also to the back whipper-in on the other bank, if there be one. Sometimes he will lead the terriers, if these do not run with the pack: a duty best left to the Deputy-Master, or failing him the Field-Master or Secretary, if a kennel-boy is not brought out to perform it. On the further bank from the Master the forward whipper-in will be the paid hand, who will keep abreast of the forward whipper-in on the Master's bank. The fourth whipper-in will perform the same duties beyond the river as the second on the hither bank: but he will probably have rougher going to negotiate, and fewer hounds to control, the tendency of a pack drawing or on a drag being to keep to the Master's bank.



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[H. Jones, Ipswich.

Hounds Held up for Lunch. (Essex O.H.)

The duties and responsibility of the forward whipper-in are onerous and serious. To him is committed the task of keeping hounds in check, preventing them from racing ahead and out-pacing the Master, stopping riot (if any), and turning hounds to the Master's horn or "holloa," or stopping them whenever necessary. He will frequently have to hold hounds up even on a hot drag for various reasons, and while watching his water warily as he goes, noting every tendency to "mark" on the part of leading hounds, and taking cognisance of possible holts and hovers, one ear will always have to be on the alert for signals or orders from the Master: one eye ever on the bank to notice spraints, or to seal or spur the Otter at landing places.

To do all this satisfactorily it stands to reason that he must be gifted with considerable intelligence, a love of the sport which will be to some extent its own sole reward, great keenness and aptitude, length and strength of limb, good wind, and activity. Strictly speaking, no obstacle that will not stop hounds should present any insurmountable difficulty to the forward whipper-in. His eyesight should be quick and good, and he should be able to tell instantaneously whether hounds are on a drag or at riot: since if hounds will run riot they are more likely to break away in front than to go

back. When an Otter takes to land and the pack is running him hard the forward whipper-in must endeavour to be with them and to be in at the kill. It is his duty to hoist the dead Otter on his pole while the Master performs the obsequies: unless this job be left to the paid man.

Although from his position throughout the day he will frequently have to speak to hounds, it must all be by way of rate. "Hold up," "Hold hard," "Gently," "Steady," "'Ware riot," and so forth, will form his vocabulary. Never should he permit himself to encourage hounds to hunt or work: to do so were to usurp the prerogatives of Master and huntsman, and to act detrimentally to the best interests of the sport. Always he should speak to hounds as quietly as possible; a noisy tongue in a forward or any other whipper-in is most objectionable. He should be sparing in the use of his whip. It is not needed to rouse an Otter, as it may be a fox or a hare: and although Otter-hounds when struck or rated do not turn sulky like harriers, they will not work the better for chastisement. Hounds can often be "held up" by merely holding an Otter-pole horizontally in front of them, and this is better than cracking a whip. Since, from the hounds' point of view, the forward whipper-in is conceivably regarded as a spoil-sport, always baulking them and stopping them when they are keenest on a drag or

a little bit of riot, he can never hope to be popular with hounds. If he be popular with the Master it is as much as he can expect. He may not even carry biscuits in his pockets with which to treat a favourite hound: indeed, for him there should be no favourite hound.

Altogether it will be seen that this important official of a hunt has the hardest work of any in the field, and perhaps the least credit. For the most part he is alone and at a distance from the rest of the Field, his nearest neighbour the kennel whipper-in on the opposite bank of the stream, with whom he must work in unison. Not for him the solace of a lady member's companionship and gossip, since no follower should be ahead of the Master on a drag or when drawing: and even when the quarry is put down, the forward whip's place is higher up or lower down the stream, where as "look-out above" or "look-out below" he may gaze the Otter as he vents or lands and "Tally" him up or down for the information of Master, hounds, and Field.

His compensation will be that he sees more of hound work and often more of the actual sport than anyone else out, and if he use his opportunities aright his opinion as to the merits of individual hounds, the probable haunts of the quarry, and the quality of the chase will be of extreme value to the Master and the hunt generally. No man

is better fitted to prepare an account of the day's sport—provided he adds a capacity for descriptive writing to his other accomplishments—than is the forward whipper-in.

Needless to say he should know every hound by name and be a sound judge of their individual character for reliability or the reverse. In this way he can prove of incalculable service to the Master in the field.

His colleague in the field, the professional kennel-huntsman—or kennel whipper-in, as I prefer to call him—will possess all these qualities as part of his regular equipment for the business by which he earns his livelihood, and in addition to those which fit him for his work in kennel, with which I have dealt elsewhere.

The work of the other amateur whippers-in is comparatively simple. They have merely to keep one eye upon the Master and the other roving for the observance of shirkers and lagging hounds while drawing, putting them on without unnecessary noise, but not sparing the lash when a hound is rebellious or running a private hunt after waterfowl, or inclined to open on riot of any sort. For the rest, they may enjoy the social amenities of the Otter-hunting field, and beyond assisting the Field-Master or Secretary in keeping the Field from pressing on hounds, preventing damage, and seeing that gates

are properly closed, have little to do until the Otter is put down, when they will take post as "look-out" or help to form a stickle, and, the quarry brought to hand, will assist with pole and whip to keep hounds at bay while the Master is performing the obsequies in solemn form.

CHAPTER XI.

THE FIELD-MASTER AND THE FIELD.

IN Otter-hunting, next after the quarry, hounds, and huntsman the Field is of the greatest importance. In this sport its members can take a more prominent part than in any other form of hunting. In fact, in stag-hunting, fox-hunting, or hare-hunting the Field is sometimes the greatest obstacle to a proper enjoyment of the sport, whereas with Otter-hunting the success of the day depends to a large extent upon the presence of a knowledgable and hard-working Field. It is scarcely too much to say that no pack of Otter-hounds could account for their quarry unaided by man. While the Master is engaged in hunting his hounds in the water, and his whippers-in are assisting him by putting hounds to his horn or to a holloa, it is the members of the Field, posted up and down both banks of the stream, who alone are able to keep him informed from time to time as to the movements of the hunted Otter. If the Field simply insists upon rushing up and down the

bank like a flock of sheep or a bevy of Board-school boys whenever they hear a holloa or hounds giving tongue—as is too often the case—it were wiser on the Master's part to take hounds home forthwith than to continue trying to show sport to a Field that is doing its best, however unconsciously, to prevent him from doing so.

A great deal of the annoyance caused to the hunt officials and genuine subscribers by a large proportion of the members of many Fields is, I am convinced, due to ignorance of what is really expected of them. Most, if not all, followers of Otter-hounds would be only too glad to know what they ought to do during the progress of an Otter-hunt. But how are they to learn? The Master can hardly hire a lecture-hall and hold classes for their education, nor when he is actually hunting hounds has he time or opportunity to instruct them in their duties. The most he can do, then, is to ask one man to stand here and another there, or to call for a stickle and hope to Heaven that it has been properly manned.

In some few hunts, notably Mr. Courtenay Tracy's, the large majority of members and followers have learnt from long experience under the same Mastership precisely what is expected of them during the progress of a hunt, with the result that each takes naturally his or her proper place at a

find, and is to be found only where he or she is wanted until the Otter is either killed or given up. It is not difficult to detect when with other packs of hounds the man or woman who has had the advantage of hunting the delightful rivers of Wiltshire and the densely-wooded streams of the New Forest with Mr. Courtenay Tracy. On the other hand, I have been the only member of a Field of over a hundred who entered the water to support the Master, huntsman, and whipper-in of a North-country pack during a hunt—in warm weather—that lasted from 10.5 a.m. to 6.50 p.m., when if only a couple of dozen followers had kept their eyes on the water, or half that number had helped to form the stickle for which the Master called towards sunset, the Otter could have been undoubtedly accounted for.

The only method by which a M.O.H. can hope to educate his Field lies in getting two or three of his best and most amenable supporters together, explaining to them exactly what he wants done at different stages of a hunt, and asking them to re-impart his instructions to their own immediate relatives and friends as opportunity shall occur. It is, however, of little use for such disciples to defer their teaching until the last moment. When an Otter is afloat it will never do for the would-be apostle of correct conduct in the Otter-hunting field

to be running to and fro seeking his catechumens. He will only be setting a bad example which a rushing crowd will speedily imitate, until the last state of that hunt shall be worse than the first. Nor is it fair to ask the Field-Master to become an instructor: his real duty is only to see that the Field is carrying out instructions they should already have assimilated, to which end he should himself be properly instructed. Perhaps the best plan will be for me to give some brief hints as to the duties of members of the Field from the beginning to the end of a hunt.

To begin with the meet. It is polite to be punctual. Every subscriber is invited to "meet" the Master at an appointed place at a fixed hour. For members of the hunt who are of importance owing to the generosity of their subscriptions, their kindness in allowing their water to be drawn, their hospitality at luncheon-time, or for any other reason, to keep the Master waiting when he meets at their gates (unless they have previously notified him that they will not be present) is as much an offence against etiquette as though they kept him waiting when he asked them to dinner. The Master, it must not be forgotten, is the host on these occasions, and subscribers and followers alike are in the position of guests, and should behave as such. An appreciation of this point would go a long way

towards securing good and useful Fields, so important to the enjoyment of sport.

Five minutes is quite enough law to allow, especially in these days of lazy habits and late meets, when the dew is rapidly vanishing under the hot beams of the summer sun and every moment is of importance if a useful drag is to be obtained. There will be plenty of time for "coffee-housing" on the way up-stream; and each arrival having saluted his host with a "Good morning, Master," and lifted cap, the Master will move off with a single note on the horn to show that the business of the chase has begun, and cast hounds off at the nearest point.

The Field will fall in behind the hunt officials, and if both banks of the stream are practicable for foot-passengers, some will go on one bank and the rest remain on the other. They will regulate their pace to that of the hounds, remembering that no one except the forward whippers-in on either bank must be ahead of hounds drawing, that the Master will be with or just behind hounds, and that no follower should be close behind the Master (whom I am still picturing as huntsman also), much less in front of him, unless, of course, the Master has expressly invited him or her to walk along with him. Whenever the Master stops the whole Field should stand still, not go sauntering ahead of him in the confident

belief that he will catch them up in a few seconds. By so doing they insensibly hurry him on and press hounds on too, besides setting a bad example to those behind—and nothing seems to be quite so infectious as a bad example set in the hunting-field.

Here and there may be a man who takes a keen interest in hound-work or a visitor from some distant pack who is anxious to study the method of hunting employed in a different country from that whence he comes. To such some latitude may be permitted; but they should always remember that it is of less importance that their individual desires should be gratified than that any risk of spoiling sport by setting an example that is pretty certain to be followed should be incurred.

Again, there is generally someone in every hunt—often, I regret to say, a lady—who thinks he (or she) knows more about Otter-hunting than all past, present, and future M.M.O.H. put together. Such persons can, in their own opinion, do no wrong, and resent being asked to “Hold hard, please,” as a personal insult. They may be good supporters of the hunt financially, of quite good social standing, with the name of being keen sportsmen or sports-women, and singly they may be doing very little harm by their action. But if Mrs. So-and-so observes Miss Something-or-other marching on ahead of hounds, looking for spur-marks or spraints, she sees

no reason why she should not join her ; and possibly a third lady recollects an exciting bit of gossip which she thinks would amuse the pair in front, and rushes boldly on with flapping skirts and a shrill cry to them to wait for her, until presently half the Field is well ahead of hounds.

The temptation to forge ahead is particularly great upon a winding stream with perhaps not much cover on its banks. While the Master is drawing every inch of water hoping to pick up a drag across the bends, the Field is trooping steadily across these bends, perhaps a couple of hundred strong. If hounds strike a drag and try to carry it over the bend or into a back-ditch on the other side of the meadow they find themselves in the midst of a crowd of people, who have effectually foiled the scent in their passage and rendered it impossible for them to work it out. Therefore, the Field should remain on the hither side of a bend until hounds have very nearly worked round it. There is no hurry in Otter-hunting, and those who walk most slowly and stand still oftenest may be assured that they will see most of the sport.

Another annoying habit that some followers have is that of not coming to the meet, but of motoring or driving to some bridge a few miles up the stream which hounds are drawing and walking along the banks to meet them. Where people persist in doing

this the chances of picking up a drag become remote, and the day's sport may be ruined in consequence. The lazy folk, who are the chief culprits in this respect, and who prefer to turn out after a comfortable and normal breakfast, should keep away not only from the banks of the river but from the water-meadows and tributaries also. If they walk upon the nearest road until hounds have passed by them and then cut down to the stream they will still be in time for the fun and run no risk of spoiling sport.

It is these thoughtless late-comers who are responsible for another annoyance which affects hounds and huntsman, namely, a habit of shouting loud-voiced greetings across the river to friends and acquaintances whom they recognise on the other bank. Hounds should be troubled to listen to no voice save that of their huntsman and the whippers-in until an Otter is put down, when they will be on the alert for a "tally" from any member of the Field who has viewed the Otter. Therefore, all loud-voiced talking, shouts of greeting, laughter, and so forth in their vicinity are calculated to get their heads up; and anything of the sort when hounds are marking is fatal to sport.

Otter-hunting is a very sociable pursuit, and one of its many pleasures is the intercourse between members of a hunt when hounds are drawing,

especially on a blank day. But this intercourse need not be carried on to the detriment of sport, and if conversation cannot be low-toned, the least the high-spirited brigade can do is to keep well behind and away from the stream, where their merriment can do no harm.

There will always be "babblers" in every Field, as in every pack, and the Field-Master should not hesitate to check the former as the whippers-in do the latter. Such extreme cases as that of a small schoolboy perched upon a rock in mid-stream while hounds were swimming their Otter, and shouting to his mother fifty yards lower down to know "if the sandwiches were safe," are, fortunately, rare.

Another nuisance is often caused by ladies bringing their pet dogs out on leads: "The poor little thing must have exercise, you know"! The result is that Fido or Tiny gets madly excited, pulls at his piece of pink ribbon until he is half-strangled, barks and shrieks hysterically, gets the puzzled hounds' heads up, and generally disintegrates matters, ending by breaking away and rushing wildly down a steep place into the river, from which he returns panic-stricken, with such tail as he may possess tightly tucked between his legs, and followed by a couple or two of young hounds, who think that if this strange beast won't let them catch an Otter they will at least try to catch *him*.

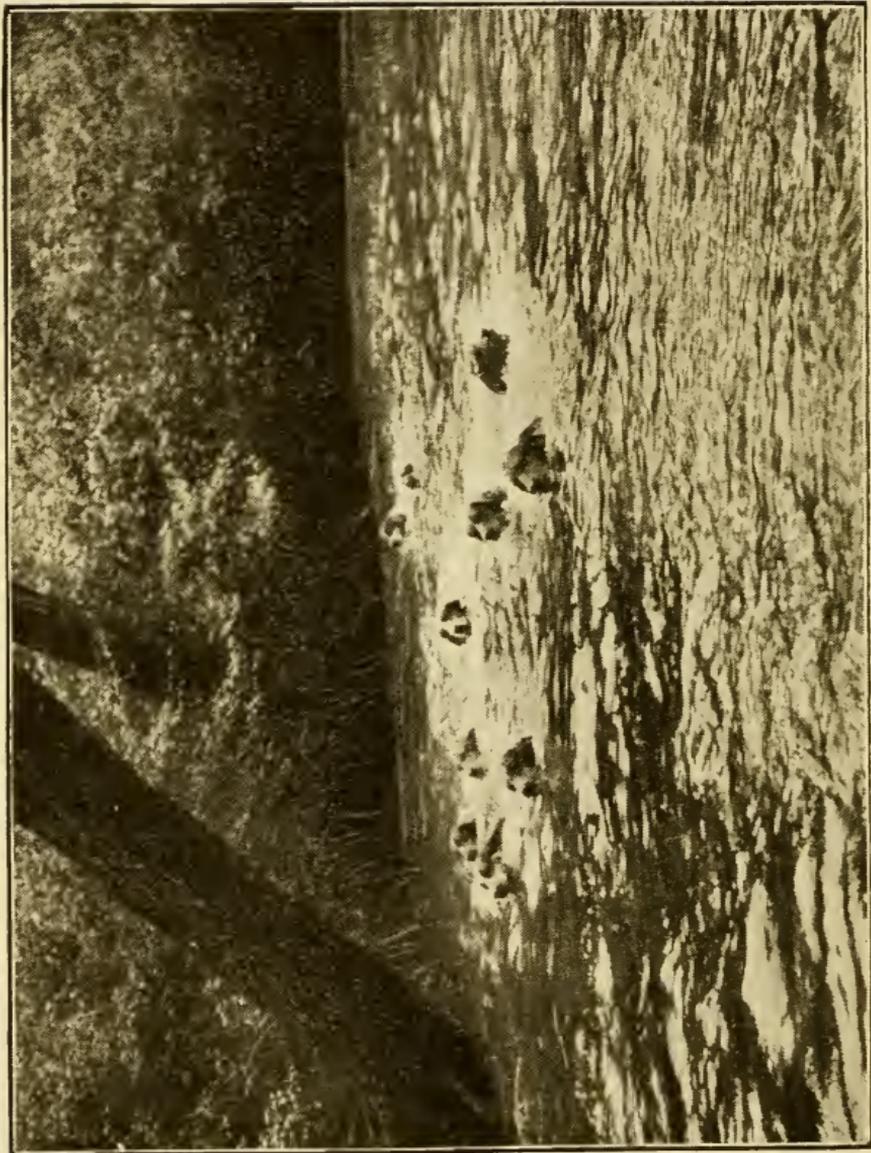
When hounds are held up for lunch or other light refreshments there is a suspension of all the rules, save such as may pertain to picnicking, with which I do not pretend to be acquainted. I may, however, venture a hint to those hospitable members of a hunt who bring out provisions and drinks in their conveyances: and that is to remember that the hunt-servants have been up several hours longer than anyone else, and have had harder work to do, and that they will possibly be more grateful for a substantial sandwich or a chunk of bread and cheese than for much strong drink. Never offer them spirits, and if they can be given a choice between beer and either cider or shandygaff they will, if wise men, select one of the latter beverages.

We will hope that presently, in the course of the hunt, a loud and unmistakable roar from the hounds proclaims "a solid mark." What should the Field do then? What they too often do is to make a wild rush in a body to the spot at which hounds are marking their Otter. This is precisely what they should not do; they can be of no use there, can see nothing, and only hamper operations.

If each member stands on the bank exactly where he or she was when hounds marked, they will collectively be of great assistance to the huntsman, and incidentally possess a better chance of seeing something of the sport. Directly hounds have

marked, the whippers-in and other well-trained officials of the hunt will have taken up their proper positions up or down stream in readiness to "tally" the Otter when he bolts. An Otter commonly tries to go down-stream at his first attempt, and except in small waters, where he may be allowed to go where he pleases, it is usual to try to force him up-stream. In order to do this a stickle is formed across the bed of the river in the shallowest place convenient. If the Master calls for a stickle, it is the duty and privilege of the Field to respond and form one by entering the water and standing in it, leg to leg, from one bank to another as close together as possible, moving their poles gently to and fro in the water so that they may have a chance of ascertaining whether the Otter succeeds in breaking the stickle and getting below them or not. Meanwhile those members of the Field who are not required to form the stickle will have spread themselves quietly up and down the banks, taking positions whence they can command some piece of water which the hunted Otter is likely to use and where he may most easily be viewed.

"Keep your eyes on the water!" is the motto for all Otter-hunters, once an Otter is found. It cannot be too often nor too emphatically repeated. The man who glances first at the water, then at the sky, then at his nearest neighbour, next at the



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Hounds Swimming the Foil. (C.T.O.H.)

hounds, and so on, is pretty useless. The moment he takes his eyes off the water that moment the Otter passes him; and presently he has the mortification of hearing a "tally" from above or below and of knowing that, so far, he is of little use as an Otter-hunter.

Having decided, however, to "keep his eyes on the water," and not to look for flying Otters in the air, the tyro will want to know what to look for. He may never have seen an Otter except in a glass case, and have no idea what appearance it should present under the surface of the stream. Moreover, such appearance as it does make frequently varies. In a clear, boulder-strewn stream he will see the Otter itself, looking about half its natural size, and gliding along, a mere shadow, at a great pace, seemingly close to the bottom. In these circumstances it is possible for a large fish—a salmon, or even a pike or trout—to be mistaken for the Otter, and even a big roach is said to have been "tallied" in the Tetcott country. Be quite sure he is the quarry before you shout "Tally-ho!" It is better that he should pass you and be "tallied" below by some more accurate observer than that you should give the hounds and huntsmen false information. If you are doubtful and there is anyone near you, point it out to him quietly and without excitement, and if he sees it to be right leave him to

shout. Never "tally" because another man thinks he has "gazed" the Otter: leave him to do the shouting and to bear the blame if he be wrong.

In deep, dark, slow-running water you will not see the Otter at all. What you will see will be a number of air-bells, or bubbles, rising to the surface of the water and following the course which the unseen quarry is seeking. Their rapid movement, their number and size, will prevent your mistaking them for the bubbles caused by eels and tench, and when you "tally" you should point with your pole at the spot where they disappeared from view.

In very muddy water, especially on a narrow canal or mill-lead much overhung by bushes, you may not even see the "chain," or "belling" as it is sometimes called. What you will see is a V-shaped ripple or wave on the surface of the stream, the apex of the V being caused by the Otter's snout, from which you can learn in what direction he is swimming. He will not remain long in sight, but will dive and come up to breathe under a floating leaf, some dead brushwood, behind a boulder, or under the bank.

When an Otter has been on the swim for some little while, especially in a deep pool or a stretch of water, well watched and with little cover on the banks, he will begin to show himself. Now is the time to look for the Otter himself in place of mere

signs of his proximity. He will put his head up quietly, shake the water from his ears and whiskers, take a quiet look round for his enemies the hounds, and dive again, often showing a considerable portion of his back and making quite a splash in disappearing. Here you must be careful not to mistake a water-vole or a wild duck or a moorhen for *Lutra vulgaris*. After he has taken breath in this way he swims very quickly, and shows himself after the lapse of a minute or two a long distance from where he was last seen. Because you hear a "tally" out of sight up-stream do not, however, take your eyes off the water. Very probably he will next show himself close to you, and that in, seemingly, an impossibly brief space of time.

When an Otter has not been "tallied" for some while and hounds are silent, it is time to look at all the likely places below or behind which he may be taking his breath. Examine the adjacent rocks where they crop out of the water; peer under the bank in your vicinity and gently move the dead brushwood and flood-rubbish with the end of your pole. You may espy a small motionless object which imagination leads you to think looks like the top of an Otter's head, with two beady black eyes fixed on you. Unless you are close enough to be absolutely sure, or the possible head moves distinctly, do not be in a hurry to shout. Move gently towards it,

and if it then dives "tally" quickly and loudly, marking, if possible, which way it has gone.

The object in "tallying" is, in addition to letting the huntsman and Field know that the Otter has been "gazed," to bring hounds to the spot where the Otter was last seen. Therefore, if hounds are close by when you get a view, a single shout loud enough to attract their attention will suffice; but if they are half a mile away you must "tally" loud and long, and keep it up until hounds are with you or another man's "tally" has shown whither the Otter has gone since you saw him. Of course if hounds happen to be swimming or running their Otter almost in view you need not "tally" at all. Never "tally" if you have not seen the quarry for yourself, no matter who asks you to do so. If two or more of the Field see the Otter at the same time let the one nearest to him do the "tallying." Not to "tally" an Otter which you see, and no one else does, is to "crab" the hunt. It is a frequent solecism with ladies who are nervous of attempting to cry aloud and shout, but prefer to wait until someone else sees the quarry and takes the duty off their hands and lungs. Much valuable time is often wasted in this way.

Beyond watching the water, whether from the banks or in a stickle, and "tallying" whenever the quarry is seen, the members of the Field have nothing

to do. They should never presume to interfere with hounds, be chary of remarks to the huntsman when he draws nigh them, and never attempt to touch the Otter with their poles, a stick, or their hands, unless expressly asked to "tail" him with the last-named, and then only if they are sure they can manage a none too easy task. An Otter can give one a nasty bite, but fortunately it is a clean bite, and heals quickly.

When the Otter has broken the stickle of which you are a member, get out on the bank and look out until the Otter is signalled below. Then if you are asked to go down and form a fresh stickle do so; if not, stand still until he comes up again, when you can re-enter the original stickle and try to do better than last time.

Whatever mistakes you make, and however much you may be abused, or even sworn at, by the Master in consequence, you must say nothing in return, but stick to your post or go elsewhere as he shall direct. If you want to justify any conduct of which he has complained, wait until after the kill: he will then be much more likely to listen to and appreciate your arguments, if not to explain that he acted under a misapprehension of your motives.

If you see anyone doing anything flagrantly wrong—such as an ill-conditioned boy striking hounds with a stick—and neither the Master nor any other

official of the hunt is within reach, you should certainly check the culprit; and if he pays no attention, take his weapon away from him and so prevent further mischief. Where a crowd of hooligans, whether well or ill dressed—and sometimes in mining and manufacturing districts or near large towns great numbers of poachers, loafers, and other unruly persons will turn up at a meet of Otter-hounds—is rushing up and down and doing its best to spoil sport, it is competent for any well-conducted member of the Field to exercise a restraining influence by asking the crowd to “ Hold hard ! ” “ Stand still ! ” (Scotticé : “ Take time, now ! ”) or “ Be quiet ! ” as the case may be. And at all times he should lend assistance to the Master and hunt officials in their endeavour to conduct the sport according to the rules thereof.

It will be seen from the foregoing remarks that, for the Field, Otter-hunting differs from all other forms of the chase in requiring its participants to watch the water and to assist the huntsman by signalling the presence of the hunted animal near them. If they are “ looking-out ” or forming a stickle after an Otter has been “ put down,” and the Otter has not broken the stickle and gone down (or up as the case may be), they should not move until they hear the Master’s whistle blown as a signal to them to come on : the only signal for which the whistle

should be employed. Where it is not so employed the Field-Master or the Secretary should make it his business to see that the patient watchers below are duly informed and not left behind—martyrs to a sportsmanlike devotion to duty.

The same may be said of them at a kill, which may have taken place half a mile or more above them. When they hear the “rattle” blown they will of course recognise what has taken place. But there is generally no reason why they should have been “out of it” for the last quarter of an hour, and they should have been properly notified that they might come on. Oversights of this sort on the part of the Master are bound to react on the behaviour of his Field.

The Otter killed, everyone gets as near as he cares to do to the scene of the worry, in order that he may join in the chorus of “Whoop, whoop!” wherewith rejoicing is made at the happy consummation of the day’s business. While the Otter is being weighed and the trophies cut off, the Field will assist in keeping hounds and terriers—and sometimes the crowd—off by forming a hollow square: holding their poles horizontally above the level of their knees and keeping their legs close together. They should not strike or kick at the eager, baying hounds, but should gently keep them back by pressure of leg and pole. The last rites performed and the

carcase thrown to the pack, discipline is relaxed, and there is opportunity for the notching of poles, the production of sandwiches and flasks, and general congratulations on the success of the day's proceedings. If the finish takes place at a distance from home or the nearest railway station don't expect a lift on the hound-van. If the Master can offer you one he is pretty sure to do so; but it will be seldom indeed that this is found possible. If you cannot walk you should arrange to have a conveyance of your own somewhere handy.

If it is customary to take a cap at a kill, the Hon. Secretary or, in his absence, the Field-Master will go round with it. Half-a-crown is the recognised contribution for a kill, and certainly no one should give less than a shilling, whether he subscribes to the Hunt Fund or not. Which reminds me that it is the first duty of the members of the Field to subscribe to the pack with which they hunt, and to give, not the minimum but the highest subscription they can really afford. The man who spends, say, five-and-twenty pounds in the incidental expenses of hunting during a season—uniform, train fares, lunches, hotel expenses, and so forth—and limits his subscription to a paltry guinea would do far better to cut out a few of his hunting days and add the money thus saved to his annual subscription. In any case, let him be careful, if he does not pay the

prescribed sum, not to wear the uniform or badge ; and, if he be entitled to wear them, to be particular in doing so, not only with his own but with other packs. If he does not subscribe sufficient to cover the cost of postage he can hardly expect to have cards of the meets sent him, and it is not by any means invariably advisable to advertise them in the local Press.

So far we have dealt with the duty of the Field in the field. Out of it, on the way to the meet and on the way home after hunting, it is presumed that they will act as ordinary ladies and gentlemen, and especially remember that the wearing of uniform makes them conspicuous, and that any forgetfulness of the usages of polite society is sure to render them remarkable and to reflect upon the credit of the sport. Nick-names such as that of "The Love-and-Lunch Club," once applied to a certain hunt, are not an enviable asset of the establishment.

One rule which applies to the Field in all descriptions of hunting I have not yet mentioned, and that is the necessity of refraining from doing damage to the fences, growing crops, field-gates, &c., on the land traversed during the day's sport. The last man through is bound to close the gate ; but if on looking back he sees two or three stragglers coming along at a distance, it is better to close and fasten

the gate as a sign to them when they arrive to leave it as they find it.

Although sportswomen as a rule are capable of looking after themselves and of negotiating most of the obstacles they encounter—many of them, indeed, in these days resent proffered assistance—yet it is well to help ladies over very bad places, and especially where there is barbed wire. Bad language, by the way, is nowadays entirely out of place in the hunting-field, but if there is anything that calls for its employment it is barbed wire, and a heartily-bestowed curse directed at the owner or occupier who permits it to be erected on his land is most unlikely to “come home to roost.” It has been proved to be by no means a necessity of successful agriculture, and its continuance in general use is a serious slur upon the legislative capacity of the High Court of Parliament. It is the friend of the poacher, the lazy and incompetent proprietor or tenant, and of the shiftless and useless section of rural society generally: it is the enemy of sport, good farming, successful horse and stock rearing, wild nature, and of all that is sound and decent in country life.

I have not said much, except incidentally, as to the duties of the Field-Master to a pack of Otter-hounds, the fact being that if he occupies himself in seeing that followers are carefully observing all

the various points of conduct laid down in this chapter he will be doing all that is expected of him. In enlightening the ignorance or correcting the inadvertence of the Field he will have to be skilful in combining *suaviter* with *fortiter*. He must necessarily, without being in the smallest degree snobbish, distinguish between the various classes and individuals represented in the Field. The "gentle lady" who is doing wrong through innocence of what is right must be dealt with very differently from the poacher or the discharged labourer who is taking an opportunity of surreptitiously damaging the property of his late employer under colour of following the sport.

In order to be on the safe side the Field-Master should know every member of his Field by sight, name, and reputation: a counsel of perfection, it is to be feared. When he has to deal with an unruly crowd in no way connected with the water being hunted, who are getting their sport—and various unconsidered trifles in the way of rabbits, moorhens, mushrooms, ferns, or "gibby-sticks"—for nothing, and who will do little to help, but many things to hinder, the Master and the hounds from showing sport to those who have paid to see it, he will have to take up a very strong position. If they will not obey his behests and will not desist from following hounds when he orders them off, he must report the

circumstances to the Master. As the latter will have appointed him to the onerous post he occupies, and presumably made sure that he is not an irascible martinet or unreasonable "Jack-in-office," it will be well in such a case to hold hounds up for awhile, and see whether the "roughs" take the hint. If not, it may be necessary to take the extreme step of sending hounds back to kennels; for the Field-Master is to the Master what his Chief-of-the-Staff is to a general officer, and if his authority is not sustained he has no longer a *raison d'être*.

In dealing with these—happily rare—crowds of poachers and loafers, it will be found that where tact and gentle persuasion are thrown away sarcasm will be found more effective than mere bullying abuse. I have heard of one Field-Master in the North who got rid of fifty per cent. of an undesirable following—which not only refused to help man a necessary stickle, but by rushing about, shouting and laughing, was hampering hounds on a difficult stretch of water—by the quiet suggestion that "most of them would be better off in gaol than out Otter-hunting, as there they would at least be compelled to wash their feet." But that, however effective, must have been a very extreme case, and it does not do to carry either sarcasm or abuse too far.

Without any wish to appear ungallant, I am afraid that the Field-Master will have most trouble

with the followers who are of the fair sex. But I think their solecisms are perhaps due to ignorance only: although that ignorance is by no means invincible. No one can be more appreciative of the feminine keenness and quick eyesight that so often come to the huntsman's aid when the male members of the hunt have become "slack" from one of several causes; while on those blank days that will come occasionally in the best of seasons their presence, lively chatter, and piquant criticism of men, things, and even one's own method of hunting hounds, do much to atone for the absence of the one thing necessary to enable one to show sport—"our friend the Otter."

CHAPTER XII.

THE HON. SECRETARY, TREASURER, AND COMMITTEE.

THE Secretary occupies perhaps the most onerous, and certainly the least pleasant, of all the offices connected with a hunt. Not only does all the literary work fall to his share, but most of the dirty work of every sort. He has to dun careless or reluctant subscribers when their subscriptions have fallen in arrear, and must possess tact in order to know precisely how to deal with each individual. If any unauthorised person venture to wear the uniform it is the Secretary who must write and point out the solecism to the offender. Even in the field, if the Field-Master be absent or unavailable, or if the Master request him to do so, he must check the misplaced exuberance of some follower, or admonish some other to close the farmers' gates as "last man through," or take a message from the Master to one of the whippers-in, to the sportsmen forming a stickle, or to the "look-out below," to the miller whose hatches it is desir-

able to raise, or to the farmer whose man with a crowbar becomes a necessity of the moment. As the Deputy-Master and Field-Master are his aides-de-camp, so is the Secretary the Master's galloper or orderly in the hunting field. On a drag his position should be in the rear, so that he may see that gates are properly shut and that damage is not done to the mowing grass, fences, and so forth. During a hunt he should be in close attendance on the Master, ready for any emergency. One of his most important duties on hunting days will be to see that those who form the stickles or act as look-out men shall be promptly advised when hounds move on and not be left behind at the post of duty longer than necessary.

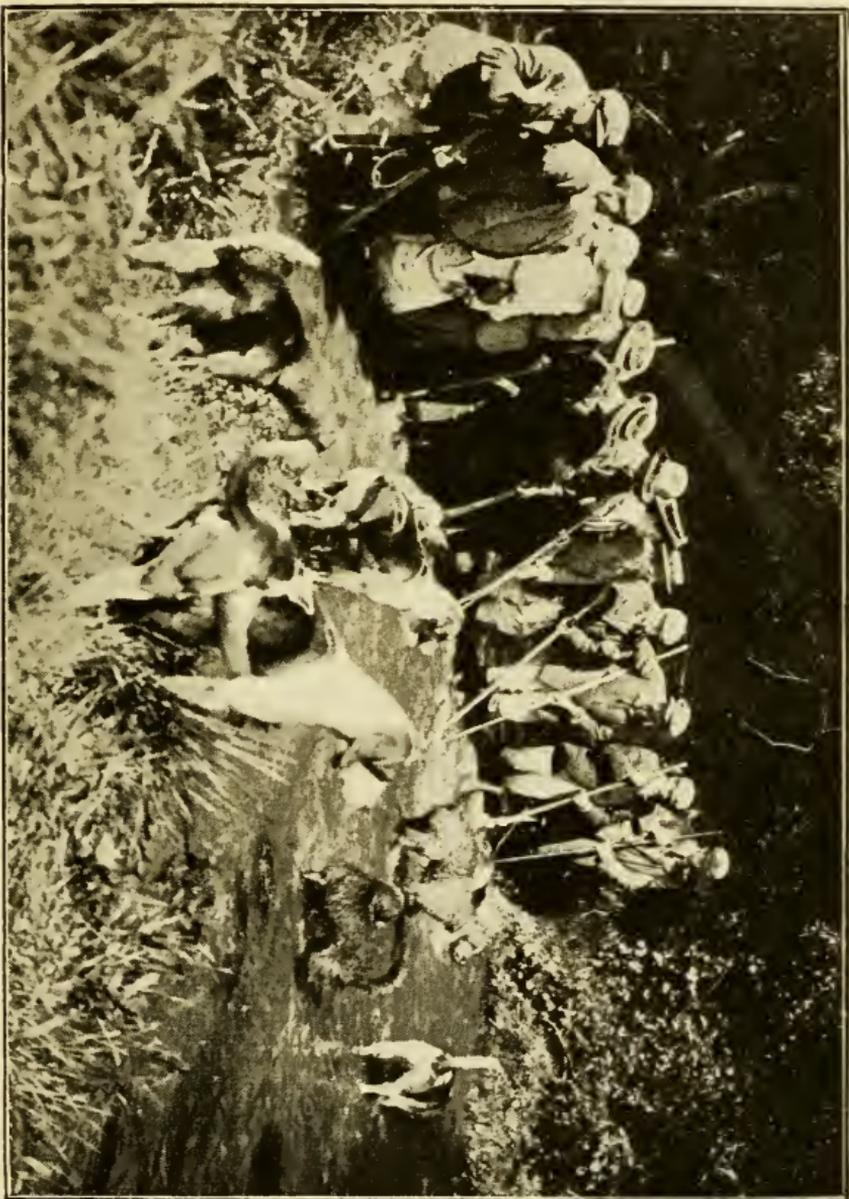
At a kill the Secretary will take the trophies as the Master cuts them off, and keep them for him until he distributes them after the worry. While this is going on he will take the cap, if it is customary to take a cap at a kill; indeed, this is his special, if not very alluring, duty on all occasions when a cap is to be taken. He will bear the bag, and pay the fees for a find or a kill to the water-bailiffs, keepers, or millers, as the case may be.

It will also be his duty to arrange for a hound van when the pack is taken by rail or road, and to engage hotel and other accommodation when they are "lying out" away from kennels, and

book seats in any brake or other conveyance employed to take followers to the meets.

He will receive the list of fixtures from the Master, have them printed on postcards and despatched to the members in good time, and, if it is customary, send copies to the local and sporting papers. He will be most particular in advising landowners, tenant-farmers, millers, angling clubs, riparian owners, fishing tenants, and others by whose permission or courtesy the hunt alone exists, of the intention to visit their water on a fixed day. Meets of Otter-hounds should be arranged if possible a month at a time, and, a provisional list having been drawn up, the different classes of people mentioned above should be privately notified in order that, if any alteration in the programme has to be made for any reason, it may be done before the printed cards are issued.

He should be able to write a good letter to the Press if occasion arise, and unless, as is generally the case, some member of the hunt specially undertakes the work, should be competent to send a well-written account of the day's proceedings to the *Field*, *Horse and Hound*, or other sporting weekly paper. In order to succeed in this particular he must know what is the proper day to send in his "copy," so that it shall not be "crowded out" or consigned to the "W.P.B."



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A Good Stickie. (Crowhurst O. H.)

[W. J. Abrey, Tonbridge.

In hunts run by a committee he will have to order all the supplies for the kennels, pay the accounts, wages, and so forth, keep the books, prepare the annual report and financial statement. Where the better plan is followed of guaranteeing the Master a fixed sum or a minimum, and leaving him the entire management of kennels, the financial part of the Secretary's work will be limited to collecting the subscriptions and handing them over to the Master at regular intervals—say, before the commencement, in the middle, and at the end of the hunting season. In cases where the Master runs his own pack and does not ask for, or merely "accepts," subscriptions, he is usually his own Secretary; when the field-duties of the Secretary as enumerated above are divided between the Deputy-Master, the Field-Master, or some of the whippers-in or other prominent members of the hunt.

It is usually the better plan for the Secretary to act also as Treasurer: but if there be an Honorary Treasurer appointed his duty will be merely to receive such moneys as the Secretary may hand him and pay them out again at the latter's request, rendering an account of receipts, expenditure, and of the balance at the annual general meeting of the hunt. In any case where subscriptions are taken it is more satisfactory if the accounts are duly audited and passed by one or two honorary auditors

chosen from among the regular subscribers of the hunt outside the Committee.

It will be seen that the Secretary of a pack of Otter-hounds must be a man picked from among many men. He must be a good business man, for to him fall all the varied and responsible business details of the hunt. He must at the same time have plenty of leisure time or be able to take a good deal of holiday from his other pursuits: since next after the Master and the kennel whipper-in (who are paid to be present) he is the most indispensable in the field—and out of it—of all the hunt officials. Indeed, no one who is not fairly certain of being able to be present at all or most of the meets during the season should, apart from other considerations, allow himself to be persuaded to take the position of Secretary to a pack of Otter-hounds.

In addition to these advantages he should be a man of tact, even-tempered, not puffed up by his own conceit, nor in the least vainglorious. Although he has no authority of his own, he exercises the authority of the Master in the field and of the Committee elsewhere: but he should never lay himself open to the accusation of being a "Jack in office." Many of his duties will be extremely unpleasant: but there is a pleasant way of performing unpleasant duties. This he will have to learn. He

should always be the same if he can—it is not easy, but this is more or less a counsel of perfection—always good-humoured, friendly, making no distinctions between the subscriber of ten guineas and the subscriber of one guinea, ever ready to throw the soft word to appease the growing wrath of others, and to pocket any apples of discord he may find lying about in any of the members' orchards. Above all, he should know when to hold his tongue; and should “study to be quiet.” A Secretary who is a “babbler” should be remorselessly drafted.

The smaller the Committee of a hunt and the less it interferes in its conduct the better it is likely to prove. A Hunt Committee is usually elected by the subscribing members from amongst themselves, the more prominent, influential, or representative men being chosen. Ten or a dozen members are sufficient, with a quorum of five: the Master, Deputy-Master, and Honorary Secretary being *ex-officio* members of the Committee. All the members apart from those *ex-officio* should be elected or re-elected annually by ballot without exception at a general meeting. Only in this way can the continuance on a Hunt Committee of some cantankerous or undesirable person be prevented: and one such sower of dissension spells eventually the disintegration of a hunt. The best time for the annual general meeting is at the beginning of March, a clear month

before the earliest possible date for opening the season.

The chief thing that a Committee has to do is to appoint or elect a Master. If its members perform this duty properly there should be little or no call for their further interference. The Master-elect will state the terms upon which he will assume office, or express his readiness to do so on the terms offered by the Committee, and the entire responsibility for the conduct of the hunt will then devolve upon him in consideration of the sum annually guaranteed him by them. He will appoint his Deputy-Master, select his Field-Master and whippers-in, engage his hunt servants, and make all proper arrangements for the conduct of the hunt. Should unforeseen difficulties arise he will ask the Secretary to call the Committee together, and will then either act on their advice or refer the matter to a special general meeting. The Secretary, Treasurer, and Auditors will, of course, be elected by the Committee with the Master's concurrence.

Where hounds or kennels, or both, are the property of or held in trust by the Committee, matters will necessarily be conducted somewhat differently : but it is undoubtedly the most satisfactory plan wherever it can be carried out that the Master should own the hounds and own or rent the kennels, either from the Committee or otherwise, being given

or guaranteed a sum proportionate to the extra cost of doing so. He can then breed, draft, exchange, buy, or sell hounds as he likes, his only duty to the Committee and the subscribers whom they represent being to "show sport." Even where a new Master finds that hounds and kennels are the property of the Committee he will be wise if he insist that they pass for all practical purposes into his possession while he remains Master: paying, it may be, a nominal rent for the latter and having the pack properly valued before taking it over on loan, at the same time entering into an agreement to hand over the same number of hounds of an equal value on relinquishing the Mastership. This plan invariably works in a manner satisfactory to all concerned. Subscriptions to packs of Otter-hounds do not amount to very large sums: the work is hard and onerous: and many men, beyond the actual sport (of which the Field often gets and sees more than the Master), would find little recompense were it not for the interest (and occasional profit) of breeding, exhibiting, and selling hounds: for which purpose they must be to all intents and purposes his own. No M.O.H. could well be a "bouman"* to his Committee.

For the rest the Committee of an Otter Hunt

* Under the patriarchal system in the Highlands a bouman was one who took stock from his chief and shared the increase with him.

will act as the Committee of a club in dealing with any member of or subscriber to the hunt who shall by reason of his behaviour have made himself objectionable to his fellow-members or subscribers or to the owners or occupiers of land or water within the boundaries of the hunt, or shall in any way have been proved guilty of conduct prejudicial to the best interests of the hunt. The Committee should have power to call upon such a person to explain or apologise for such conduct, and in extreme cases to expunge his name from the list of members or subscribers, and discontinue him from wearing the hunt uniform.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE SCIENCE OF HUNTING THE OTTER.

IT is scarcely too much to say that every "country" and almost every river requires a different system of hunting if one is to be successful in showing sport. The methods pursued in hunting in the mud-bottomed "diks" of Sussex and the Fen Country are not similar, except in the broadest outline, to those required for the large rivers of the South of Scotland, flowing over beds of solid rock through tree-crowned gorges where the sun never penetrates. Similarly it is not possible to hunt Otters in lakes, meres, and salt marshes as they would be hunted in the rocky mountain burns of Highland Scotland or among the caves and boulders of the sea-coasts of the Western Islands.

Nevertheless, in all these places—wherever, in fact, there are water, and eels, and frogs—Otters are to be found and successfully hunted by him who will take his methods out of stereotype and adapt them to a novel environment.

It will be seen that it were impossible, even if it were advisable, to lay down any definite rules for hunting the Otter, or to assert in general terms that one method of hunting is superior to any of several other methods. Among these are two principal systems of hunting. One is that of casting-off hounds up-stream on water that has perhaps not been hunted for a twelvemonth, leaving hounds to pick up a drag if they can, while the Master and his Field walk quietly forward in pleasant converse with one another until an Otter is found, or until a convenient bridge is reached, whereon luncheon is provided, and whence hounds are sent home at the end of a blank day. The other is that in vogue with Masters who have hunted the same streams for a considerable number of years, who remember the places where they have put down their quarry in the past, and push on from one holt to another, with hounds clustered at their heels, now all on one bank, now all on another, regardless of a drag; and when these have tried the last known holt on their day's beat they also score a blank and send hounds home.

Both these methods—and, indeed, nearly every system of hunting Otters practised nowadays—are very near akin to that somewhat futile proceeding known as “looking for a needle in a bottle of hay.” With all due respect for those “Old Masters” who

continue to practise them, there can be very little doubt that they pass a great many more Otters than they ever find. Of the two, probably the "holt-to-holt" system is responsible for the greater number of blank days; as it certainly is—if the terriers are allowed to run with the pack—for the deplorable chopping of cubs. Now, a blank with Otter-hounds is every bit as bad as one with foxhounds or harriers, though somehow or other it has come to be regarded with more equanimity as frequently inevitable by followers of the summer sport.

I have no sympathy, either, with the man who says that he "does not care about a kill so long as he gets a hunt." One goes out with a pack of hounds and terriers to find a huntable Otter; and if one finds him it is one's business to kill him, if it can be done in a fair and sportsmanlike manner. Otter-hunting with any other object than this in view may be a pleasant enough pastime for a bright summer day; but it is not sport. And the man who talks too much of the fun of hunting Otters without killing them is like enough to find his sources of amusement seriously curtailed by the watchers and keepers of those riparian proprietors who will have the Otters frequenting their waters kept within due bounds—small blame to them.

This is the *raison d'être* of Otter-hunting from the non-sporting point of view. It is the best and most

humane manner of preventing the undue increase of Otters on our lakes and streams while ensuring their preservation as one of the most interesting creatures in the British fauna, and incidentally giving healthy outdoor amusement to several thousands of persons during those summer months when all other sport, save angling and hawking, is at a standstill.

I suppose, if it were possible from a consensus of the expressed opinion of a majority of keen Otter-hunters to strike an average, the ideal Otter-hunt would work out something like this: A two or three mile drag, gradually improving—a solid mark at a holt not absolutely impregnable—a prompt ejection of the quarry by the terriers without recourse to spade, crowbar, or shaking the bank by jumping upon it—a good “view” when the Otter is put down, or, as Turberville calls it, “beats the water”—a two hours’ swim in a deep pool or long stretch of quiet water, with hounds speaking to the wash and the Otter frequently “gazed” and “tallied”—a possible land excursion when the game gets tired of the water and runs a ring back to the stream with hounds close on his rudder—finally, a handsome kill by hounds and terriers, unassisted, on a shallow in full view of most of the Field.

If a M.O.H. is lucky he may get such an ideal hunt twice or thrice in a season; and if the weather is propitious, the water warm, the swim an extra

long or good one, and the Otter makes a fine fight of it at the finish, weighs well on to 30lb., and it is not too late in the afternoon nor too far from home at the kill, he will count it one of his red-letter days.

But how many things there are to militate against his showing such sport as this! First, no Otter may be working the stream to be hunted at the time selected for his meet, and if the hunt only pays that stream an annual visit this is pretty certain to be the case. Secondly, his river may come down in flood and prove too deep and heavy to hunt. Then, if he has not some tributary or smaller water handy to which he can walk hounds over—a contingency for which he should always provide, as the flood has surely shifted the Otters from the big water to the smaller streams—the fixture must perforce be abandoned, to the annoyance of his subscribers. Again, owing to dependence upon railway facilities on the morning of meeting, or to the fancied convenience of some important supporters of the hunt, he may meet too late in the day—he can hardly meet too early, though I am no believer in moonlight meets at midnight. In this case there will be no drag, and it can only be by a “fluke” that he will find an Otter.

On another occasion, if he follows the old-fashioned plan of keeping hounds first on one bank and then on another, crossing with them at the

shallows and bridges, he will be certain to pass an Otter that has floated down in the still water under the opposite bank and gone to bed in some holt there of which the Master knows nothing. If the river is broad, hounds have no chance of winding him, and when a mile or so higher up they strike his drag at last, the day resolves itself into a hopeless hunting of "heel."

Another difficulty may arise when hounds mark their Otter in an inaccessible fastness, which requires, in order to put him down, the destruction of some forest tree or the pulling to pieces of some elaborately-constructed "weiring"—in the absence of some "real good" terriers, who can go wherever an Otter can go, swim under water to find the entrance to his holt, and lay to him with their tongues until their barking gets on his nerves, so that he leaves for very peace' sake. I am bound to say, though, that in my experience if an Otter takes very long to shift it is, as often as not, a bitch with small cubs. If it leaves and almost immediately returns to the same holt this will certainly prove to be the case, and unless hounds are taken away and the terriers called off irremediable mischief will be done. Yet how many cubs one sees killed in a season because a Master does not appreciate that the reason an Otter—like all other beasts of the chase—ever leaves a strong holt is because he resents the dis-

turbance of the normal conditions under which he exists, and not because he fears death, of which he can, in fact, know nothing, not being Divinely gifted as is Man—and this is really the great gulf set between Humanity and the rest of the Animal Creation—with a knowledge of the future, or with any appreciation of the distinction between Time and Eternity, which for the non-human and soulless beast has, in point of fact, no existence. This being so, all the nonsense talked and written by so-called “humanitarians” about the cruelty of sport—a phrase which thoughtless sportsmen often regretfully admit as true—is seen to be without foundation; and provided an animal is killed with the minimum of pain, as by the impact of a bullet, the stab of a knife or a spear, or the strong teeth of a hound, and not slowly tortured to death in a trap, or by a gunshot wound not immediately fatal, or by slow poison, the word “cruelty” is misused in connection with his death. In the case of a hare caught in the jaws of a greyhound, or by harriers and beagles, death is practically instantaneous; and as up to the last she has no thought except that she is more than a match for her pursuers, she can suffer no inconvenience except that of physical fatigue. If this were not so she would never become a beast of the chase. Disturbance of the normal conditions of her existence first sets her

going ; confidence in her ability to outwit or outpace her disturbers and to reach some spot where she will no longer be disturbed keeps her moving, and renders hunting possible. If this were not so, and deer, fox, hare, and Otter recognised—what is not in the least true—that they had no chance of escape when pursued by men and dogs, they would not budge an inch, any more than the live rabbit placed in a glass case with a boa-constrictor moves a hair's breadth, because he cannot escape and recognises it. It would be the same with a human being. The pinioned criminal makes no effort to escape from the executioner on the scaffold because he knows death to be inevitable ; but if you released his limbs and gave him a fair sporting chance of escape he would promptly avail himself of it.

In the case of a beast that fights to a finish like the Otter—and, to a certain degree, the fox—there can again be no cruelty. A wild animal can be sensible of nothing but physical pain, and cannot suffer that while fighting, any more than a soldier feels his wounds in the heat of a hand-to-hand conflict, or the terrier who tackles an Otter in a holt for over half an hour, during the first ten seconds of which he may have had his lower jaw torn away, notices the pain until the contest is over. With domesticated animals trained by man this is not so thoroughly the case ; and the dog who is his master's

constant companion will undoubtedly suffer mentally as well as physically from neglect, unkindness, or cruelty.

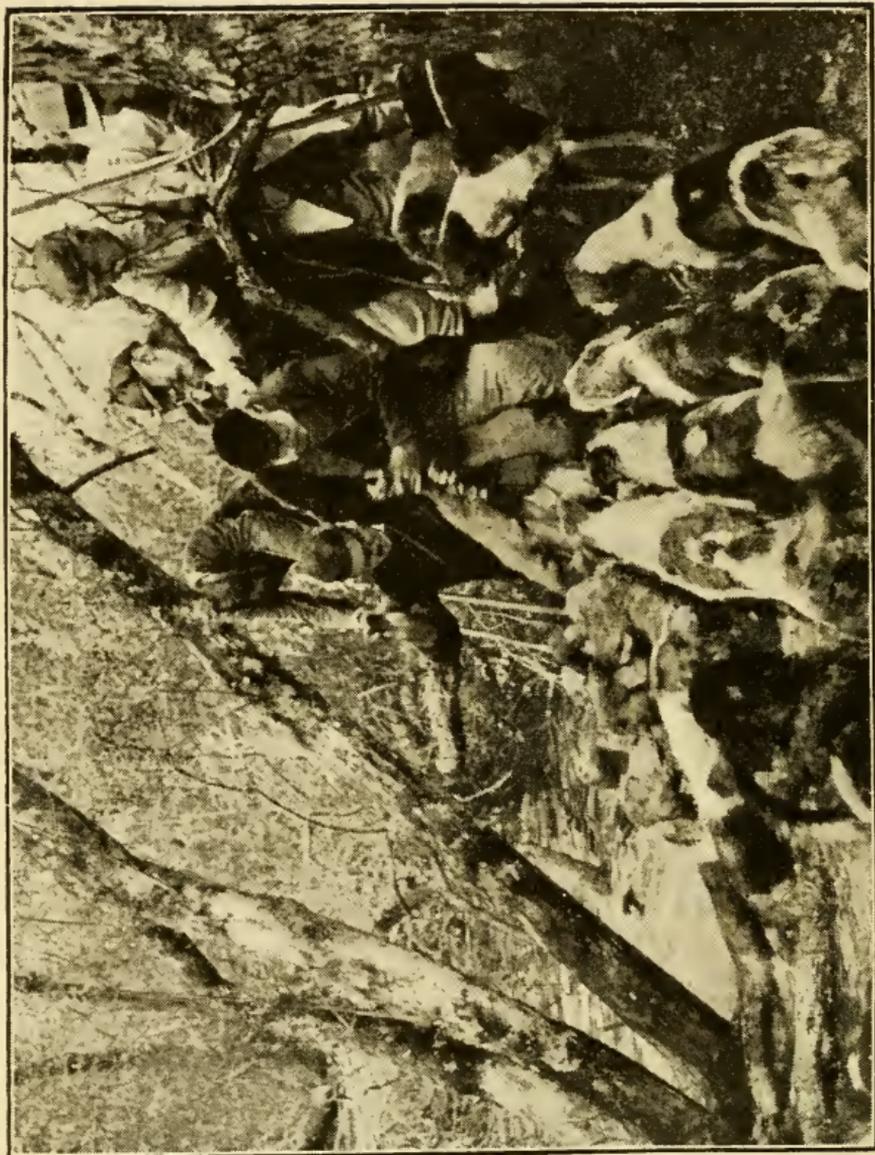
But the only way in which the wild animal can be wounded is materially, not spiritually. Its strongest instincts are for food, rest, and sexual commerce, in that order. Starve, disturb, or confine it alone and you destroy its normal conditions, and it will endeavour to escape and gratify them. This is all that the hunted animal is doing when he affords us the pleasure of pursuing him. But in the case of the female of any wild beast of chase we have at certain seasons to take into account the "maternal instinct"; which brings us back at long last to the bitch Otter put off with difficulty from her stronghold.

Resentment at disturbance of the normal conditions impels her to leave the couch in which she has laid up her cubs: the promptings of the maternal instinct compel her to return forthwith to her offspring. Even if she is prevented from doing so she will hang about the place where they are and perhaps be killed "wet," when the cubs, too, will perish. I once witnessed an instance in point in which a bitch Otter belied all the accredited habits of her race. She had been "put down" with two cubs of five or six months old, both of whom took refuge in some weiring, where they were temporarily

“made in” for fear of accidents. The bitch went down stream and hounds were taken up to look for the dog, whom they found and killed after a good hunt. While they were absent she returned and took up a position on the bank commanding the weiring where her offspring were, and she remained there some two hours, in full view of a small crowd of villagers, who very handsomely refrained from interfering with her in any way. Needless to say she was not hunted, and doubtless happily relieved and completed the rearing of her offspring: for of the essence of sport is the South-country toast, “Death to dog Otters! Long life to the little bitches!”

All this has taken us far enough from the causes of blank days which I was enumerating. I should not have expatiated on the subject were it not that the Master of Otter-hounds who is not also a student of the natural history of his quarry is but half a sportsman; and only upon a right appreciation of the motives by which an Otter may be actuated under differing sets of circumstances can a real knowledge of its natural habits be built.

Another obstacle to showing sport is encountered when the hunted Otter takes refuge in some such impregnable spot as that suggested above: the owner of which is perfectly within his rights in declining to have it tampered with. The only thing to do in



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A Kill with Mr. Courtenay Tracy.

[F. G. Short, Lyndhurst.

such cases is to take hounds on, even if one is pretty sure there is little chance of finding another Otter. Proprietors vary in this respect, as they may set a higher value on the pleasures of sport and the convenience of others than upon an inconvenience or expense that they may have to bear ; and I remember a case in which a proprietor on one bank refused to permit his weiring to be touched, even to allow a terrier to go in, while his neighbour on the opposite bank said to the Master, " You're welcome to pull the whole castle down if it will do you any good."

The prejudices of such objectors—as of those who close their water to hounds—must be instantly respected, and even the most unsporting are more likely to assume a friendlier attitude in the future if they see that the Master willingly and cheerfully regards their clearly-expressed injunctions without grumbling or argument.

The only " unforgivable " person is he who follows hounds over other people's property and calls himself a sportsman, but when his turn comes objects to their visiting his own waters, whether under the pretence that it disturbs his fishing, or his wild duck, or adjoining pheasant-rearing enclosures, or for some other equally far-fetched reason. There are only two or three words in the English language that are strictly applicable to a man of this sort, and they are not usually printed.

It must be confessed that the science of hunting the Otter is not yet an "exact" one. It would be presumption on my part to pretend to teach the "Old Masters" of the sport their business. But old Masters die or resign and young men come forward to fill their places, and if the presently-increasing popularity of Otter-hunting continue it is likely that we may see a multiplication of new packs, for there is certainly room for quite double the present number in the British Isles, to the great benefit of the sport—whatever the members of those hunts that spread themselves over several counties are pleased to think. It is therefore to the Masters of the future that the subsequent portion of this chapter must be addressed. "I do not mean to say that these are rules, for no man can hunt a fox by rule," said Colonel Anstruther-Thomson in his invaluable "Hints to Huntsmen," "but I want to make you think about them." I wish to apply this remark to my own suggestions as to the methods of finding and killing Otters that are most likely to prove successful.

In the first place, the man who aspires to become a successful Master of Otter-hounds must study the natural history of his quarry. He will, of course, read with precaution all the matter that has been printed about the Otter in the recognised books on natural history. It is not much, and contains not a

few fables ; still, it should be read. But he must become a more practical naturalist than books can make him if he is to know anything about the habits of Otters under normal conditions, and it is this knowledge only that will help him to *find* his Otter. What Otters do when hunted—that is to say, under abnormal conditions—he will learn from observation in the hunting field, and that will be of assistance to him in the art of *killing* them.

Before, however, he can kill his Otter he must find him, and that is the task which is set the Master and his hounds on every hunting day. He will do well to recall to his memory on the way to the meet the undoubted fact that an Otter may be anywhere. On the other hand, of course, he may be nowhere—at least, on the water included in the day's draw. Such an unfortunate accident should be the only cause of a blank day.

To be more explicit, Otters “lie rough” and often at a long distance from any water, in the most unlikely places. A favourite habit of a dog Otter who has been working a large river in warm weather is to paddle up a small runner or beck, possibly for a mile or more, and lie up for the day in some root or among brushwood or thick cover where few would suspect him to be. When hounds feather at the spot where the beck or runner enters the main stream and show a

tendency to travel up it they should be encouraged to do so, since the water has carried all scent down with it, and perhaps the Otter has not touched the banks or herbage or stepped upon a stone for the first hundred yards or more of his journey. Too many Masters and huntsmen, however, seem afraid to let hounds stray away from the waterside, and the moment they show a tendency to do so the horn is blown, whips crack, and they are rated forward—while the Otter is left behind.

Otters have been found in many strange places : under house drains a long way from water ; among cairns or rocks half buried in heather, with the nearest burn half a mile distant ; among the under-wood on the crest of a hill two hundred feet above the river. Although I have not heard of one being found in a tree or a haystack, I see no reason why these should not be resorted to upon occasion. Fox earths and badgers' dens they will use, as well as rabbit burrows ; and if hounds mark at any such it does not follow that it is " riot," or that because the fox or the badger or the rabbit bolts first when the terriers are put in the Otter will not follow him after a brief interval.

To study the habits of his Otter the aspiring Master must live near, or pay frequent visits to, one or more of his rivers, often after nightfall and especially during the winter months. He need pay

little attention to the stories of keepers and others as to the prevalence or scarcity of Otters. Few of them know an Otter when they see it, and habitually regard moorhens, water-voles, and in fact anything that swims across a stream at dusk, such as a stoat or a rabbit, as an Otter. Black cats that go poaching among reed beds after young birds are frequently reported as "big Otters." It is sometimes an advantage to take on these expeditions a terrier that can really be trusted or an old favourite hound that has left the kennels and lives pensioned in the Master's yard. Either of these will tell him when Otters have been about before he will have found any spraints or seal, and they will often be the means of introducing him to a new holt. During the winter, when snow is lying on the ground, he will have a great opportunity of estimating how many Otters his rivers contain, and there can be no pleasanter occupation on a bright winter day, after a fall of snow sufficient to stop both hunting and curling, than to set himself the task of tracing the nocturnal wanderings of his summer foes by following their footsteps. When the thaw comes he can do good work by noting by means of the narrow, unmelted strip that runs across the meadow, where some forgotten drain is concealed, with entrance perhaps beneath low-water level. Here, when hounds are next at fault, he will know where to dig

with the certainty of finding in a spot where, perhaps, aforesaid the quarry has got "out of mark."

Next to this systematic study of the natural habits of the Otter, the most important part of the young Master's education is a thorough knowledge of the ways and peculiarities of each of his hounds. He should not only know which is to be trusted and which doubted, and have mastered their various traits and idiosyncrasies, but should be able to tell them by their voices when out of sight. Only long and constant acquaintance with them when actually hunting them can really enable him to complete this branch of his education; but if it is to be complete it must be done. When a single hound speaks to a drag he must be able to tell by his knowledge of the particular hound and by the quality of his note whether the drag is fresh or stale, for some hounds will speak to a drag a day or more after others would refuse to own it. As a general rule rough hounds will own a drag much later than will smooth, while of course in some places the drag will lie much longer than in others. In some of the deep rivers flowing through rocky gorges into which the sun never penetrates, the waterside growth will hold the scent of an Otter for days; while in a holt much used by Otters, and not long vacated, hounds will mark almost as though the game were at home. Curiously enough, hounds seem to take little or no

notice of spraints, which hold for the human nose the only distinctive smell pertaining to the Otter—that of pleasantly-scented snuff; while they will often not speak when running over a sandy or muddy spit deeply impressed with recent seals, but will open out directly they get among the herbage and undergrowth.

I have been led to the fringe of that vast subject, the mystery of scent, upon which I do not propose to say more than that it is possibly less a mystery in Otter-hunting than in fox- or hare-hunting. There are of course good and bad scenting days, and days when the water seems to carry no scent at all, so that hounds are unable to swim their Otter a yard, and get no assistance from the “ream” or “wash.” If an Otter takes to the land, however, even on days when the drag has been poor and the “wash” altogether absent, hounds usually get a screaming red-hot scent. I have also noticed that when an Otter, after running a mile or two before hounds in covert, regains the water, he seems to have literally run himself out of scent and hounds can make nothing further of him, and very likely have to leave him when a kill had seemed certain. Bitch Otters, like hares in kindle, under similar conditions and when suckling cubs, are usually bad-scented, which affords a confirmatory hint to the observant huntsman who wants to save his bitches and cubs. There can

be no doubt, either, that the temperature as well as the purity or otherwise of the water helps and hinders scent, which is never good where the stream is allowed to be polluted by sewage or factory waste, or by the filtering into it of artificial manures or of some of the products employed to render roads "dustless" in consequence of motor traffic.

Scent also varies at different times of the day, being often hot before the sun has sucked up the dew, dying away as he reaches the meridian, and perhaps freshening again after a thunder-storm or a smart April shower has fallen and revived its traces among the herbage and rushes.

What is wanted in modern Otter-hunting is a quick method of hunting, so that time—which has come in these days to be so valuable that it has to be saved wherever possible—may not be wasted. Some huntsmen "potter" when they might be moving quickly and getting forward to their Otter before the best of the day is over: others rush past strong holding and neglect to try up the side streams when they should be making good every inch of their ground. It is only the Master with some small amount of imagination and who uses his brains who will know when to push on and when to potter, but if he has no brains and no imagination it is undoubtedly safer to potter rather than to push. A huntsman should think out where his quarry will

most probably be found, basing his conclusions on the indications at hand in spraints, seal, scent, size and colour of the water, state of the weather, and hour of the day. Then he will proceed to act on his conclusion and wait upon his hounds to tell him whether it is right or wrong, never forgetting that the unexpected happens more frequently in Otter-hunting than in any other form of the chase. On hot days, particularly in August and September, Otters will be more frequently found lying out than in holts; and indeed in my experience quite thirty-five per cent. of all the Otters I ever saw found were lying out. I have heard some Masters say that hounds will not voluntarily hunt the heel drag of an Otter, but if left to themselves will put themselves right. This is not my experience, and "Otter" Davies thought that "heel too often affords the most enjoyable scent." So that until an Otter has been "sealed" up or down, or in rocky rivers his spraints found on the down-stream side of a boulder or the reverse, it is not safe to decide whether one is hunting heel or not.

An Otter often takes the water at the end of his night's work, and instead of going on up stream drops back with the current to his holt, leaving no trace. The unimaginative Master, coming to the end of the drag, will press on for a mile or so hoping to pick it up again and encouraged perhaps by hounds

feathering or even giving tongue at a "touch" a day or two old. Time is then lost in going back to where the drag ended and trying for the quarry down stream. Here I may say that a huntsman should make an invariable practice—wherever it is not actually impossible—to have hounds on both banks at the same time and to keep the kennel whipper-in on the opposite bank to himself. The more a drag improves as he goes on the more necessary it is to draw carefully and to forbear from "pressing" hounds forward.

It is also of importance to cultivate a quiet manner of hunting. The silent huntsman is usually not very successful, for hounds and Field alike are in ignorance of what he thinks or wishes them to do. Hounds work better for encouragement: a cheery but not too loud "Try for him, my lads!" "Wind him, there!" with the commendatory mention of particular hounds' names when you see them working especially well or painstakingly, is essential to success. Leaving hounds severely alone on principle is a bad and old-fashioned plan. On the contrary, a Master who is always shouting instructions to hounds, whippers-in, and Field is still worse. Hounds get their heads up and are staring about for instructions, the whippers-in hang behind and keep out of sight until called, and the Field persists in doing wrong until shouted at. If a Master wants

to convey orders to anyone of whom he is not within speaking distance he should ask his nearest neighbour to go and deliver them for him; which none will refuse to do.

Once the Otter is found it should be left to hounds to hunt and kill him, save for the assistance to be derived from the watchers on the banks or at the upper or lower stickles. When hounds are getting done and require blood, the day is growing late, the water cold, rain falling, the Field tired and beginning to thin out, and perhaps a long journey back to kennels in prospect, it will be necessary to give the hounds a little more assistance. Tailing may be resorted to; or if the Otter is beat and hounds are all round him and have shaken him several times it is permissible if you can see the Otter, and hounds, by reason of their churning the water and splashing it into each other's eyes, cannot, to place your pole gently underneath him as he swims and lift him so as to get his head above water and give hounds a view. It is a practice that might conceivably be abused, and none but the Master actually hunting hounds should ever adopt it, and then as rarely as possible; otherwise, in the excitement of a prospective kill, members of the Field will come jumping into the water and, thinking they may with impunity imitate the huntsman, begin thrusting at the Otter with their poles and possibly even

striking at it in an unsportsmanlike manner deserving of severe reprobation.

Tailing is in these circumstances possibly better, but it is not always practicable, and in no case should an Otter be tailed unless hounds are close enough to him to seize him before he is drawn entirely out of the water. In any other circumstances tailing is not justifiable.

If hounds after seizing their Otter are not quick in despatching him—rough hounds often appear to “mumble” their game where the quicker, keener foxhound will crush the skull with a single bite of his powerful jaws—get hold of the rudder and pull against them. This will make them keener and finish the business more quickly. Of course you will encourage them with voice and horn, keeping up the excitement all the time.

Once dead, get the hounds to leave him, not using a whip, but pulling them off with the hands and pushing them back with pole and legs. Get the carcase under water for a minute or two while you recover your breath and then bring it ashore. Unless the terriers are picked up at the kill they will be the worse to keep clear of the dead Otter and may even get worried by hounds.

Always weigh your Otter, ascertain the sex, and dismember it yourself. It is a mistake to leave it to the hunt servants, even though you stain your

hands and clothes. No unnecessary time should be wasted over this part of the proceedings, but immediately mask, rudder, and pads are secured slit open the carcase and throw it to the waiting pack. Encourage them to "tear it and eat it," blowing another "rattle" and cheering them on; then go round and distribute the trophies, keeping a surreptitious bit of liver to "blood" the "young entry" among your Field; after which you will probably feel that "something fizzy in a long tumbler" has been well earned.

The opportunity afforded by getting two consecutive days' hunting on the same river is invaluable to the young Master of Otter-hounds. It is only possible by adopting the methods of that very excellent sportsman, the late Mr. James Lomax, of Clayton Hall, who also regulated the number of couples of hounds with which he hunted by the size of his water, and held a few couples in reserve which he substituted for tired hounds if the day proved over-long or the quarry moved into more difficult water. Even if he did not intend to hunt two days following he frequently went or sent his kennelman with one or two couples of steady old hounds on the previous day to draw the river up or down to the next day's place of meeting. In this way he made sure beforehand where Otters were, and was often able to show sport where the

modern "needle-in-a-bottle-of-hay" method would have resulted in a long and tiresome heel drag, eventuating in a "blank."

One may have such a drag which is not heel and draw up to within a mile of one's Otter; when hounds are chilled and fatigued and the day has grown so old that they are called off. The next fixture will probably be in another county. If it had been "where leave off to-day" a hunt on the following morning would prove a certainty. Or one may find a brace of Otters together, or a bitch with full-grown "followers" of from 12lb. to 15lb. One of them, maybe, is hunted and killed. If a start be made in the morning at the place where hunting ceased the previous afternoon excellent sport will be shown. The wanderings of the survivor or survivors over the adjacent country in search of their dead comrade, visiting all their holts and hides, and perhaps leading over a watershed to some neighbouring stream, will be cleverly unravelled by hounds, and some extremely pretty hunting displayed. Or the old dog, who may have been near enough to hear the "tow-row" of the previous day's sport, may have gone up stream, leaving a fine fresh drag that leads hounds direct to his stronghold, when a good hunt is probable.

The modern system of hunting a stream once

and, whatever the result, of going to another many miles away a few days later, is fatal to sport of this description—sport such as that shown by Mr. Lomax and Mr. Hill in the past—and the necessity (or fancied necessity) of getting hounds back to kennels the same night, however distant they may be, precludes all chance of showing it. It is here that the caravan or gypsy method of hunting the Otter, to which I have already referred, is distinctly recommendable.

Have as many days with neighbouring packs during the season as you can possibly manage without neglecting your own work. A very great deal can be learnt by noting the mistakes (or fancied mistakes) of your brother Masters; but never, yourself, make the mistake of pointing them out to anyone else. Keep the example for your own warning only. Of course if your brother Master should ask you for your advice or opinion—a most unlikely contingency—you will be ready to express it and to “give your reasons,” as the school-books say. But you will never volunteer them. On the other hand, if you can persuade some Master or ex-Master of reputation and experience to come and have a day with you do not miss the opportunity of asking his advice and opinion, though you need not be weak enough to act upon it if your personal conviction is opposed thereto. After all, you can learn a great

deal more from your own mistakes than from those of anyone else.

You will proportion the number of couples of hounds you take out to the size of the water to be hunted, but twelve couples is a good average. On some small streams so many would be in each other's way; in very large rivers they would be scarcely enough. When the water is cold and the weather bad, couple up some of the hounds and hold them in reserve until the Otter is getting beat and the working hounds have had about enough of it. Then bring out your fresh hounds and make a kill of it. During a long swim, especially when the water is on the cold side, it is a good plan to draw hounds off for a while and give them time to roll and shake themselves in a sunny meadow. They will work better and be just as keen when they fresh-find the quarry.

No matter how seriously you take your work as Master and huntsman of a pack of Otter-hounds, nor how many years or decades you continue in the position, you will never go out without learning something fresh about your sport and about your quarry. It is this, perhaps, among other things, that lends to Otter-hunting very much of its charm; and despite all the worries and troubles that dog the footsteps of the conscientious M.O.H., if he be a keen naturalist, fond of hound-work, and a single-

mindful devotee of his branch of sport, he will be more than repaid for all he does and suffers. When the day at length comes upon which, from advancing years, or ill-health, or any other cause, he finds that he must relinquish the Mastership, hang up his pole and his horn over an easy chair, and feed for the last time those faithful fellow-sportsmen and friends the hounds, he will probably feel the parting as much as, or more than, if he were bidding adieu to a son "going out along across the sea" or a daughter leaving him to marry the man of her choice.

CHAPTER XIV.

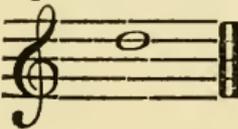
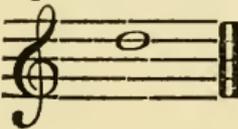
HUNTING CRIES AND NOTES ON THE HORN.

THE cries modernly used in Otter-hunting are not very many, being practically confined to those used by the huntsman, such as *Try for him, good hounds*; *Wind him, my lads*; *Yoi over, over, over* (to get hounds across a stream); *Hark cry, hark*; *Hark back*; *Hark to Thunder* (or some other reliable hound); *Mark him, there*; *That's him*; *Wind him and pull him out* (when found); *Hark t'hallo*; *For'ard on*; *Co'p, come away*, or *Come away, co'p, co'p* (to call hounds to him); and, of course, *Whoop, whoop*. The whippers-in should use only the ordinary *'Ware riot*, *Have a care*, *Get on to him*, *To him back*, and *Hark t'hallo* as a rule. The Field when they view an Otter will "tally" him by shouting *Tally-ho*. Formerly the cry was in some parts *Heu gaze*, and in others *To-ho*, which is reminiscent of the *So-ho* or *See-ho* of hare-hunting, or may merely be an abbreviated form of *Tally-ho*. *Look out above*, or *Look out below*,

is shouted by the huntsman to his assistants at a distance when he thinks an Otter is "away" either up or down stream. *Hold hard!* is used to keep the forward whip or members of the Field back.

As Colonel Anstruther-Thomson said of fox-hunting, "Many huntsmen blow the same monotonous note on the horn all day long without variation or meaning.

Without returning to the elaborate horn-music of the days of George Turberville and his "Noble Art of Venerie," with his wonderful "Call for the company" and "Call for terriers gone to ground"—to which latter, I fancy, it would prove a little difficult to persuade a modern terrier engaged in tackling an Otter to respond—there is every reason why the huntsman should let both hounds and Field know precisely what is going on by means of his horn.

When putting hounds to water he should blow a single note  to call the attention of hounds,  terriers, and "coffee-

housers" alike to the fact that the day's sport is commencing. This note he will also use to call hounds to him when drawing.

When on a drag he may occasionally double the

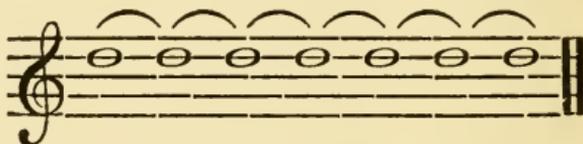
horn  to show stragglers,

both canine and human, that hounds are on a scent.

When an Otter is "put down," two short notes and a long one (corresponding to the *Gone away* of the fox-hunter) should be sounded to put everyone on the alert and let the men at the stickles know that an Otter is afloat, thus:—



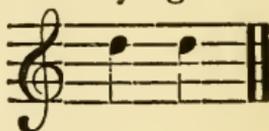
When hounds are to be called away a prolonged swelling note—
is used.

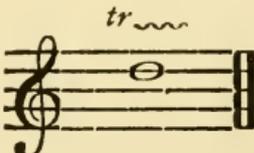


When he has them all away a long single note
will tell the whippers-in that no more are to be sought.



When hounds are swimming and trying and a "tally" comes from behind,
and the cry *Hark t'hallo* should be used.



The rattle  for *Whoo, whoop*

will be used at the "worry" and kill, as in fox- and hare-hunting.

The Master should carry a whistle, so that when he has left a stickle or "look-out" below, and it is found that the Otter has gone up or is to be given up for any reason, he can blow it to let the members of the Field who are guarding these posts know that they need no longer remain at them but are at liberty to follow on.

I need hardly add that, although the Deputy-Master or some other official may be provided with a spare horn in case of emergency, such as the accidental loss of a horn, no one should presume to use a horn except the Master who is hunting hounds. Where the Master and the huntsman are different persons the former will carry the spare horn, and it is the huntsman's duty when he hears it sounded to obey, and to see that hounds obey, whatever summons it is intended to express. The kennelman may be provided with an old horn for use in case of a break-away when at exercise, or on the road to or from kennels, but he will never use it in the hunting-field.

CHAPTER XV.

EXISTING OTTER HUNTS IN THE BRITISH ISLES.

As may be seen by a glance at the accompanying map, there are no fewer than twenty-two advertised packs of Otter-hounds regularly hunting in Great Britain, while others have just been formed in Ireland, where in former years The King's and Mr. Doyne's packs showed sport in different parts of the island. Otter-hunting, therefore, is on the increase, and despite the ill-informed, but abortive, efforts of self-advertising and sentimental busy-bodies, its future as the least artificial and most humanely conducted of all field-sports seems one of happy augury.

Nevertheless, it is undoubtedly true that several of the hunts as at present constituted have (to use an Americanism) "bitten off a great deal more country than they can chew." Their attempt to retain it is detrimental to the best interests of the sport, and especially to the keeping up of a sufficient head of Otters for hunting purposes. Explain the mystery

SOUTHERN SCOTLAND
ENGLAND & WALES

SHOWING THE OTTERHOUND
AND OTTER-HOUND PENINSULA
1907



ARVYLLSHIRE & EAST OF SCOTLAND

CUMBERLAND

CARLISLE

WEST CUMBERLAND

LAKE DISTRICT

NORTHUMBRIA

WHARFEDALE

IRISH SEA

BORDER COUNTIES
(NORTH WALES)

MONTGOMERY

M. DAVIES

H.A.W.K.S. ISLE

PEMBROKESHIRE &
CARMARTHENSHIRE

GLANCLAY

CULMSTOCK

CHERTON

M. COURTENAY
TRADYS

BARTMOOR

CROWHURST

ENGLISH CHANNEL

FRANCE



how you will, it is where Otters are frequently hunted that Otters will be found. An annual visit to a stream is worse than useless, since if an Otter is found there it only serves to show the local riparian owners, angling societies, and their keepers—not to speak of the loafers and poachers of the district—that Otters frequent their waters; and, since hounds are known not to be coming again for a twelvemonth, they are ruthlessly slain by gunshot and trap, with the result that the next annual visit is like to prove a blank.

In any country it is always in the rivers nearest kennels that the best sport is obtained, partly, perhaps, because there are more interested folk to keep an eye upon them, but chiefly because they are more frequently hunted. No stronger argument in favour of smaller Otter-hunting countries and more numerous packs could possibly be adduced, and were it acted upon such anomalies as one county supporting four packs, and its neighbour pack, a knight's move distant, hunting over parts of five counties, would be removed. As a matter of actual practice most of the sport obtained by these far-reaching hunts is found in one (or at most two) counties, and the advantage to these hunts of embracing larger districts—other than that of pride of place or territorial aggrandisement—is, so far as sport is concerned, almost *nil*. In

the extreme North, where the population is sparse, and subscribers are fewer and more scattered than among the South-country packs, this argument does not apply so closely. But there are several counties in England not hunted at all, which are so squeezed between "overgrown" hunts that local sportsmen do not think it worth while to form packs to hunt their own rivers, and (as happened in at least one recent case) cannot be sure that some far-fetched claim to their waters will not be advanced by their neighbours if they do so.

There is probably room in Great Britain for quite double the number of packs at present maintained, to the great advantage of the oldest and least artificial of organised sports.

The following is a complete list of all the regular packs, with details of their establishments, for which I am indebted to the courtesy of the Masters in every instance except one:—

The Argyllshire and East of Scotland O. H.

Founded: A.O.H. 1905, E.S.O.H. 1904, amalgamated 1907. Master: Mr. J. Muir Stewart. Hon. Secretaries: Mr. A. M. Campbell of Achendaroch (A.O.H.); Mr. W. Stoddart, Winton, near Haddington (E.S.O.H.). Kennel-huntsman: P. Rennie. Couples of hounds: 12; rough 9½, Welsh 2½. Kennels: Ardrishaig and Haddington. Days of

meeting: Two a week. Water hunted: Ary, Ruel, Tyne, Echaig, Duglass, Fyne, Add, Edon, Yarrow, Ettrick, and Tweed above Melrose; in Argyllshire, Haddington, Berwick, Fife, Selkirkshire, and Peeblesshire. The best centres from which to hunt with the A. and E.S.O.H. are Inverary, Ardrishaig, Edinburgh, Haddington, Selkirk, and Peebles.

The Border Counties (North Wales) O. H.

Founded 1903, on Mr. Buckley giving up the Mastership of the "B.O.H." Joint Masters: Messrs. H. O. Thorneycroft and R. H. Storey. Hon. Secretary: Mr. R. O. Perrott, Oswestry. Kennel - whipper - in: David P. Jones. Couples of hounds: 30; rough 11, smooth 15½, cross-bred 3½. Kennels: Newtown, Montgomery. Days of meeting: Three a week. Water hunted: Severn, Dovey, Tanat, Banw, Vyrnwy, Dysynni, Lledr, Conway, Llugwy, and tributaries; in Montgomery and Merioneth, Carnarvon, Denbigh, and Shropshire; also (by invitation) in Wexford and Wicklow (Ireland), and Cheshire and Flintshire. The best centres are Newtown, Welshpool, Oswestry, Dolgelly, and Bettws-y-Coed. Subscription: Gentlemen £5 5s., ladies £2 2s.

The Bucks O. H.

Founded 1891. Hon. Master: Lord Lilford.

Master : Mr. W. Uthwatt. Hon. Secretary : Mr. G. Uthwatt, Newport Pagnell. Huntsman : H. Howard. Kennelman : T. Howard. Couples of hounds : 18, rough. Kennels : Great Linford. Days of meeting : Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Water hunted : Welland, Ousel, Alne, Blythe, Nene, Cherwell, Ock, Ouse, Windrush, Guash, Avon, Thame, Tove, Leam, Evenlode, Arrow, Kym, Itchen, Cole, Bow ; in Bedfordshire, Buckinghamshire, Lincolnshire, Northants, Oxfordshire, Rutland, and Warwickshire. Subscription : £5 5s.

The Carlisle O. H.

Founded about forty-five years since. Master : Mr. J. W. Graham. Hon. Secretary : Mr. J. W. Simpson, Victoria Buildings, Carlisle. Huntsman and kennelman : Johnnie Parker. Couples of hounds : 11 ; rough 9, smooth 2. Kennels : Canal Bank, Carlisle. Days of meeting : Tuesday and Friday. Water hunted : Eden and its tributaries, Esk, Liddle, Wampool, Waver, Lyne, &c. ; in Cumberland. Best centres : Carlisle, Silloth.

The Cheriton O. H.

Established in 1850 by Mr. William Cheriton. Master and huntsman : Mr. Wm. Littleworth. Field-Master : Mr. Ernest Gottwaltz. Secretary : Mr. R. B. Oldfield, Eggesford, North Devon. Kennel-

man: Walter Roach. Couples of hounds: 12, smooth. Kennels: Eggesford. Days of meeting: Monday and Thursday. Water hunted: Taw, Torridge, Teign, Mole, Bray, Creedy, Little Dart, Dalsh, Yeo; in Devonshire. Best centres: Eggesford, Barnstaple, and Exeter.

Mr. Hastings Clay's O. H.

Founded 1897. Master: Mr. Hastings Clay. Hon. Secretary: Mr. W. P. Pilkington, Pencraig, Ross-on-Wye. Kennelman: John Jackson. Couples of hounds: 12; smooth $9\frac{1}{2}$, cross-bred $2\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels: Oak Grove, Chepstow. Days of meeting: Tuesday and Friday. Water hunted: Usk, Monnow, Trothy, Cowbridge, Ogmere, Wye and Severn tributaries; in Monmouthshire, Gloucestershire, Glamorganshire, and parts of Worcestershire and Herefordshire. Best centres: Chepstow, Monmouth, Ross, Newport, Cardiff, and Bridgend.

The Marquis Conyngham's O. H.

Founded 1907. Master: The Marquis Conyngham. Kennel-huntsman: M. Lannie. Couples of hounds: 14; rough 4, smooth 10. Kennels: Slane Castle, Co. Meath, Ireland. Days of meeting: Three a week. Water hunted: in Meath and other parts of Ireland.

The Crowhurst O. H.

Master : Mr. Sydney W. Varndell. Secretary : Mr. W. E. F. Cheeseman, 23, Havelock Road, Hastings. Kennelman : Arthur Lenthall. Couples of hounds : 15 ; rough $5\frac{1}{2}$, smooth 7, cross-bred $2\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels : Mousehurst, Edenbridge, Kent. Days of meeting : Wednesday and Saturday, occasionally Monday. Water hunted : River E. S. Rother—tributaries, Dudwell, Kent Ditch, May ; W. S. Rother—tributaries, Heyshott Stream, Hanmer, Woolmer ; Cuckmere ; Medway—tributaries, Teise, Beult ; Arun—tributaries, Adur, Hill Stream ; Stour—tributaries, Little Stour, Lesser Stour ; in Kent, Sussex, and part of Surrey. Best centres : Tunbridge Wells, Tonbridge, Edenbridge. Subscription : £1 1s. ; £5 5s. entitles a family to hunt regularly ; £3 3s. entitles a member to wear the Hunt uniform ; non-subscribers are capped 2s. 6d. a day.

The Culmstock O. H.

Supposed to be the oldest-established Hunt. Master : Mr. H. Welch-Thornton. Deputy-Master : Mr. C. F. Andrew. Hon. Secretary : Mr. E. A. Vaughan, Rosemount, Ilminster. Kennel-huntsman : Fred Lewis. Couples of hounds : $20\frac{1}{2}$; rough $5\frac{1}{2}$, smooth 15. Kennels : Norton Fitzwarren, Taunton. Days of meeting : Four a week. Water hunted : Exe,

Barle, Axe, Otter, Varty, Tone, Culm, &c.; in Devon and Somerset, also the rivers round Cork, Ireland. Best centres: Taunton, Exeter.

The West Cumberland O. H.

Founded about 1830. Master: Mr. J. H. Jefferson. Hon. Secretary: Mr. W. U. Armstrong, Armaside, Cockermouth. Kennel-huntsman: H. Stokes. Couples of hounds: 14; rough 2, smooth 2, cross-bred 10. Kennels: Little Mill, Cockermouth. Days of meeting: Tuesday and Saturday. Water hunted: Duddon, Esk, Mite, Irk, Ehen, Calder, Derwent, Ellen, and all streams between Duddon on the south and Ellen on the north (including Wastwater, Ennerdale, Crummock, Bassenthwaite, and Derwentwater lakes, and all streams tributary); in Cumberland. Best centres: Keswick, Cockermouth. Subscription: No limit.

The Dartmoor O. H.

Founded about 1826, then in conjunction with foxhounds. Master: Mr. A. J. Pitman. Hon. Secretary: Mr. R. W. Baynes, 3, Saltram Place, The Hoe, Plymouth. Huntsman: Arthur Mason. Couples of hounds: 15; rough $7\frac{1}{2}$, smooth $7\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels: Witley, South Brent, South Devon. Days of meeting: Tuesday and Saturday. Water hunted:

Avon, Erme, Tavy, Dart, Plym, Fowey ; in Devon and a portion of Cornwall. Best centres : Plymouth, Totnes. Subscription : £2 2s., entitling to wear the Hunt button.

Mr. David Davies' O. H.

Founded 1906. Master : Mr. D. Davies, M.P. Kennel-huntsman : C. Greenhow. Couples of hounds : 16 ; rough 5, smooth 11. Kennels : Plas Dinam, Llandinam. Days of meeting : One or two days a week ; uncertain. Water hunted : Upper reaches of the Severn, part of the Dovey between Cemmaes and Machynlleth, the Carno and Trefeglys brooks ; in Montgomeryshire. Best centres : Llanidloes, Machynlleth. A private pack ; there is no subscription.

The Dumfriesshire O. H.

Founded 1887 : Master : Mr. D. J. Bell-Irving. Hon. Huntsman : Mr. Wilson Davidson. Hon. Secretary : Mrs. Bell-Irving, Bankside, Lockerbie. Kennelman : Joe Parker. Couples of hounds : 20, rough. Kennels : Annan, N.B. Days of meeting : Five days a fortnight. Water hunted : All rivers and tributaries in the Southern counties of Scotland. Best centre : Annan. Subscription : £2 2s., which entitles to wear the Hunt uniform.

The Essex O. H.

Founded 1898. Master : Mr. L. Rose. Hon. Secretary : Mr. W. P. N. Ridley, Ardmore, Chelmsford. Kennelman : J. Deasley. Couples of hounds : 15 ; rough 6, smooth 6, Welsh 3. Kennels : Waterhouse Farm, Chelmsford. Days of meeting : Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Water hunted : Chelmer, Roding, Lee, Blackwater, Colne, Stour, Gipping, Cam, Little Ouse, Lark, Deben ; in Essex, Suffolk, Norfolk, and Cambridge. Best centres : Colchester and Ipswich. Subscription : Minimum £2 2s., entitling to wear the Hunt button.

The Hawkstone O. H.*

Founded many years prior to 1870. Master : Mr. H. P. Wardell. Hon. Secretary : Mr. G. B. Charleton, Caynham Cottage, Ludlow. Kennel - huntsman : H. D. Davies. Couples of hounds : 25. Kennels : Bromfield, Salop. Days of meeting : Three a week. Water hunted : Teme, Monnow, Usk, Wye, Towy, Cothi, Clwydd, Elway, Penk, Clun, Oni, Corve, Ledwyche, Rea, Dore, Irfon, Ithon, Honddu, Bran, Tivy, Cych, Tern, Roden, E. and W. Cleddau, all tributaries, and Ellesmere. Best centre : Ludlow.

* Repeated requests for authentic particulars of this hunt have met with no response.

The Lake District O. H.

Founded 1907. Master : Mr. Hugh Redmayne. Deputy - Master : Mr. George Grundy. Hon. Secretary, Mr. A. Thompson Martin, Ambleside. Huntsman : Isaac Fletcher. Couples of hounds : 10 ; rough $4\frac{1}{2}$, smooth $2\frac{1}{2}$, cross-bred 3. Kennels : The Borrans, Ambleside. Days of meeting : Tuesday, Thursday, and Saturday. Water hunted : Lakes—Windermere, Grasmere, Rydalwater, Ullswater, Brotherswater, Coniston ; rivers—Rothay, Brathay, Scandale, Stock, Ease-dale, Troutbeck, Leven, Crake, Colwith, Elter, and a number of tarns ; in Westmorland, Cumberland, and Lancashire. Best centres : Ambleside, Bowness-on-Windermere, and Lakeside. Subscription : £5 to 2s. 6d. One guinea entitles to wear the uniform. Subscribers of half a guinea and upwards are entitled to wear the Hunt Badge.

Mr. T. P. Lewes's O. H.

Founded 1894. Master : Mr. T. P. Lewes, Ffosrhydgaled, Llanfarian, Aberystwyth. Kennelman : W. Jacobs. Couples of hounds : $8\frac{1}{2}$; rough 6, smooth $2\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels : Ffosrhydgaled, Llanfarian, Aberystwyth. Days of meeting : Uncertain. Water hunted : Aeron, Ystwyth, Rheidol, and many smaller streams, in Cardiganshire. Best centre : Aberystwyth. Subscription ; None—a private pack.

The Northern Counties O. H.

Founded 1903. Joint-Masters : Messrs. Arthur Jones and F. P. Barnett. Hon. Secretary : Mr. W. A. Hoyle, Croft House, Ovingham-on-Tyne. Kennelman : Robert Hall. Couples of hounds : 17—mixed, rough, smooth, and cross-bred. Kennels : Abbey Mills, Morpeth. Days of meeting : Three days per week. Water hunted : Tweed, Till, Aln, Tyne, Rede, Wear, Ure, Wansbeck, Coquet, Blyth, Tees, Swale ; in Northumberland, Durham, and part of Yorkshire. Best centres : Darlington, Newcastle, and Wooler.

The Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire O. H.

Succeeded the Milton O. H. in 1906. Master : Mr. D. G. Protheroe. Hon. Secretary : Mr. G. E. S. Protheroe-Benyon, Trewern, Whitland, Carmarthenshire. Kennelman : Fred Scourfield. Couples of hounds : 12 ; rough $2\frac{1}{2}$, smooth 7, cross-bred $2\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels : Whitland. Days of meeting : Wednesdays and Saturdays. Water hunted : Gwaen, Nevern, Eastern and Western Cleddau, with their tributaries, Gwendraeth, Gining, Tâf, with its tributaries ; in Pembrokeshire and Carmarthenshire. Best centres : Tenby, Carmarthen, Haverfordwest, Narberth, St. Clears, and Whitland. Subscription : Members, gentlemen £2 2s., ladies £1 1s., which entitles to wear uniform.

The Tetcott O. H.

Originally started by Mr. Newton, of Bridestow, whom the late Mr. V. P. Calmady, of Tetcott, succeeded. Master : Mr. H. Bury Knight. Hon. Secretary : Mr. G. Candler, Black Torrington, N. Devon. Kennelman : T. Blight. Couples of hounds : 12 ; rough 3, smooth $7\frac{1}{2}$, cross-bred $1\frac{1}{2}$. Kennels : Bovacott, Brandiscorner, R.S.O., N. Devon. Days of meeting : Tuesday and Friday. Water hunted : Tamar, Lyd, Thrustle, Wolf, Carey, Claw, Deer, Inney, Waldron, Attery, Kensey, Strat, Lew, East and West Okement, Camel, and all tributaries ; in Devon and Cornwall, the country extending from the East Okement on the east to the Cornish coast on the west, and from the tributaries of the Torridge on the north to the Camel and tributaries on the south. Best centres : Holsworthy and Launceston—meets can also be reached from Hatherleigh, Okehampton, and Wadebridge. Non-subscribers are capped.

Mr. Courtenay Tracy's O. H.

Founded 1887. Master : Mr. Courtenay Tracy. Hon. Secretary : Mr. F. Rigden, Bellevue, Salisbury. Kennelman : Tom Stubbington. Couples of hounds : 16, mixed. Kennels : Wilton, Salisbury. Days of meeting : Uncertain. Water hunted : Avon, Itchen, Meon, Nadder, Stour, Till, Wey,

Wylde, and other streams; in Hants, Wilts, Dorset, and parts of Surrey and Somerset. Best centres: Salisbury, Brockenhurst, Lyndhurst, Southampton, Fareham, and Sturminster Newton. Subscription: Minimum is £1 1s., entitling to card of meets; £5 5s. entitles to wear uniform, after election by ballot.

The Wharfedale O. H.

Founded 1903. Master and huntsman: Mr. W. Thompson. Hon. Secretary: Mr. W. H. Hutchinson, Ilkley, Yorks. Kennelman: G. F. Johnson. Couples of hounds: 20; rough 14, smooth 6. Kennels: Giggleswick, Yorks. Days of meeting: Three days a week. Water hunted: Wharfe, Aire, Nidd, Esk (Whitby), Bela, Wynster, Kent, Munt, Sprint, Lune, with Wenning, Greta, and Rothey; in Yorks, Lancs, and Westmorland. Best centres: Ilkley for Wharfe; Harrogate or Knaresborough for Nidd; Whitby for Esk; Milnthorpe for Bela, Sprint; Kirkby Lonsdale for Lune. Minimum subscription: £1 1s.

The Ynysfor O. & F. H.

Founded (as far as Otter-hunting is concerned) about 1850. Master: Capt. Evan B. Jones. Hon. Secretary: Capt. G. H. Higson. Kennelman: Owen Ephraim. Couples of hounds: 10; Welsh

foxhounds, some broken-haired, some smooth. Kennels: Ynysfor, Penrhyndeudraeth, N. Wales. Days of meeting: Two a week. Water hunted: Glaslyn, Dwyryd, Dwyfor, Seiont, Gwysfai, Anglesey streams and marshes, Llyfni, Erch, Bodegroes, Soch, Artro, Sgethin, Dwyfach, and Afonwen, with all tributaries and lakes; in Merioneth, Carnarvon, and Anglesey. Best centres: Portmadoc, Beddgelert, Criccieth. Subscription: Optional.

An analysis of this list shows that the Otter-hound kennels of Great Britain contain, exclusive of puppies at walk or recently whelped, over 350 couples of hounds, employing some 50 paid hands as huntsmen, kennelmen, whippers-in, and boys, at a total cost of some £10,000 a year, no inconsiderable item of expenditure on sport during that season of the year when, save for the angler, there is very little other sport to be obtained. Of these 350 couples of hounds the preponderance is still in favour of the rough true Otter-hound, there being over 150 couples of rough hounds, as compared with some 130 couples of smooth fox- and stag-hounds, and less than fifty couples of cross-bred hounds, whose lack of stamina and propensity to tire after only a few hours' work are doubtless against their increased employment, though some

Masters declare that they have not found these characteristics among the cross-bred hounds in their kennels. Certain packs contain a few couples of Welsh hounds (less than twenty couples all told), both Welsh foxhounds and Welsh harriers, and some hundred or more terriers—chiefly white English fox-terriers—are distributed among the various packs.

CHAPTER XVI.

A GLOSSARY OF TECHNICAL TERMS.

ABROAD.—To “hit an Otter abroad” is a North-country term for “putting an Otter down” (*q.v.*).

BABBLER.—A noisy hound, one that speaks when not on the line of an Otter.

BAR.—A crowbar is sometimes used to move an Otter from a strongholt.

BEND.—The land between two reaches of a winding stream across which the Otter has travelled to gain time or avoid the current.

BITCH-OTTER.—The female Otter.

BLANK.—A day on which no trail or drag is touched.

BLOODING.—(1) Giving the dead Otter to hounds; (2) marking a boy or girl on the brow and cheeks with a small piece of the Otter’s flesh to “enter” him or her to the sport.

BOLT.—To put an Otter out of hisholt or couch.

BOTTOM-STICKLE.—*See* STICKLE.

- CHAIN.—The air-bubbles rising from the Otter's fur to the surface when he dives or swims under water. Sometimes called BELLING.
- CHALLENGE.—The first hound to speak to a drag is said to challenge.
- CHECK.—To hold hounds back from time to time when they are pressing forward on a drag: necessary to avoid passing over the Otter.
- CHOP.—To kill an Otter or cubs when found, before they have a chance to get away.
- COKE.—Same as SPRAINTS and WEDGING (*q.v.*).
- COLOURED.—Water which has been disturbed by hounds and huntsman, or by a flood.
- COUCH.—Same as HOLT (*q.v.*).
- COUPLE.—(1) The unit by which a pack of hounds is counted: thus, 15 couples = 30 hounds; (2) to couple hounds together by means of a pair of couples and collars.
- CUB.—The young of the Otter.
- DOG-OTTER.—The male Otter.
- DOUBLE.—Where an Otter has run out into a meadow and turned back towards the stream, leaving a loop of scent, it is said to be a "double." A "double drag" is where an Otter has gone both up and down a stream.
- DOWN.—To "put an Otter down" is to drive him out of his holt into the water.
- DOWN-WATER.—The cry used when it is found that

the quarry has gone down-stream (*cf.* UP-WATER).

DRAFT.—To remove hounds from the pack.

DRAG.—The trail of scent left by an Otter, by which he is traced to his couch or holt.

DRAIN.—A favourite place for an Otter to lie up by day.

ENTER.—To take young hounds into the pack and teach them their work. *See also* BLOODING.

FEATHERING.—Hounds, before being quite certain, feather, or move their sterns quickly, when they think they have hit off the drag.

FLASH.—To over-run or flash over the drag, or the holt in which an Otter is lying.

FOIL.—To spoil the scent by walking over the ground. Hounds “swim the foil” when they get the scent or “ream” on the water. Sometimes used for DRAG (*q.v.*).

GAZE.—To view the Otter. “Heu gaze!” is still sometimes used for “Tally-ho!”

HEEL.—To hunt the drag in the reverse direction to that in which the quarry has travelled.

HIDE.—The temporary retreat of a hunted Otter, such as a tree-root, hole in the bank, or heap of brushwood.

HOLD HARD.—(1) An admonition to the Field not to press on hounds or over-walk the huntsman;

(2) an order to the forward whipper-in to slacken his pace.

HOLD-UP.—(1) Order to hounds to keep to one side of the road; (2) to stop hounds for any purpose while hunting.

HOLT.—The lair of the Otter, where he lies up by day or for which he makes when pursued: often in a drain, hole in the bank under tree-roots, or in a burrow.

HOVER.—Same as **HIDE**, and sometimes as **HOLT** (*q.v.*).

HUNT HEEL.—*See* **HEEL**.

HUNTSMAN.—The man who hunts the hounds: usually the Master or Deputy-Master.

KENNEL.—Same as **COUCH** and **HOLT** (*q.v.*).

KENNELS.—The place in which the pack is kept.

LAY-UP.—A bitch-Otter is said to “lay-up” her cubs in a couch, when she produces her young.

LITTER.—The family of Otter-cubs, varying from three to five and (rarely) six in number, and born indifferently at all periods of the year.

LODGE.—The same as **COUCH**, **KENNEL**, and **HOLT** (*q.v.*).

LOOK-OUT BELOW.—An official of the hunt or member of the Field stationed down-stream to gaze the Otter should he pass the bottom-stickle.

LOWER-STICKLE.—Same as BOTTOM-STICKLE. *See* STICKLE.

MARK.—(1) When hounds bay and tear at the entrance to a holt occupied by an Otter they are said to mark; (2) sometimes used for SEAL.

MARKING-HOUND.—A hound that can be depended on to “mark” at a holt occupied by the quarry.

MASK.—The head of an Otter.

MEET.—The rendezvous at which hounds and huntsmen meet the Field before putting hounds to water.

M. O. H.—Master of Otter-hounds.

MOVE.—An Otter will often “move” when hounds have been taken away from a holt or drain after marking.

NOTCH.—The cut made on an Otter-pole to record a kill.

OTTER-POLE.—A pole of ash or bamboo, shod with steel, carried by Otter-hunters, and used for leaping or sounding purposes.

OUT OF MARK.—When an Otter is lying-up in a holt whose entrance is under water he is “out of mark.”

OVER.—To pass over an Otter is to leave him undisturbed in his holt, through the latter being “out of mark.”

- OWN.—To speak to a drag.
- PACK.—A number of hounds, usually from 10 to 20 couples, kept for Otter-hunting.
- PAD.—The foot of the Otter.
- PADDING.—Sometimes used for SEAL and SPUR (*q.v.*).
- PASSED.—When hounds carry the drag beyond the place at which the Otter is laid-up.
- PELT (anciently PYLES).—The skin of an Otter.
- PUT-DOWN.—To drive an Otter to water.
- RATTLE.—The note sounded on the horn at the “worry.”
- REAM.—Scent coming down on the water when an Otter has “moved.”
- RECOVER.—To find the drag or Otter after losing it for a time.
- RING.—Otters will sometimes land and run a ring through undergrowth back to the water.
- RIOT.—When Otter-hounds speak to or run deer, fox, hare, rabbits, water-voles, or moorhens they are said to riot. (N.B.—No hound can, apparently, withstand the temptation to hunt the scent of a Muscovy duck.)
- ROUGH.—An Otter is said to be “lying rough” when found away from the stream in a hedge-row, among undergrowth, brushwood, faggots, &c.

RUDDER.—The tail of the Otter. Occasionally called the **POLE**.

SCENT.—The odour left by the Otter during his nocturnal rambles, or on the water after he is “put-down.”

SEAL.—The track of an Otter, recognisable by the mark of its five toes and the absence of a heel; to be sought in mud and sand. Also called **SPUR** and **MARK**.

SHOAL.—To drive an Otter into shallow water.

SKIRTER.—A hound that will not work properly, but remains on the bank when the pack are swimming their Otter.

SPEAK.—Of hounds, to give tongue when on a drag.

SPEAR.—An obsolete weapon, consisting of a double steel prong affixed to one end of an Otter-pole, with which in former days (when but two or three couples of hounds were used in chase) the Otter was finally despatched on a shallow by harpooning or spearing.

SPRAINTS (from the French *épreindre*, to squeeze out).—The excrement of the Otter found on banks and boulders; it is agreeably scented, like snuff. Also called **WEDGING**.

SPUR.—The **SEAL** of the Otter (*q.v.*).

STAIN.—Both ground and water that have been disturbed by the passage of hounds, cattle, and human beings are said to be “stained” thereby.

STERN.—The tail of a hound.

STICKLE.—Formed by the Field standing leg to leg across a shallow to keep the hunted Otter from passing to unhuntable water above or below.

STICKY.—(1) Said of a stream with a muddy bottom ; (2) of a bitch-Otter which hangs about the hides and hovers on the same stretch of water for a length of time, usually a sign that there are cubs near by.

STOOP.—Hounds stoop to the drag when they put their noses to the ground.

STROKE.—When hounds carry the drag at racing speed or full-cry across a bend or on a double it is said to be a good stroke.

TAIL.—To catch the Otter dexterously by the rudder as he forces a stickle or crosses a shallow. Not countenanced in some hunts, but sometimes necessary in order to terminate a hunt in very cold water or late in the day.

TALLY.—To shout “Tally-ho!” when an Otter is “gazed” or viewed swimming or venting.

TRAIL.—Same as DRAG (*q.v.*).

TOP-STICKLE.—*See* STICKLE.

TROPHIES.—The rudder, mask, and pads, when cut off, are the “trophies.”

UN-KENNEL.—To dislodge the Otter from his couch.

UP-WATER.—The cry used on a drag when it is

found that the Otter has travelled up-stream
(*cf.* DOWN-WATER).

VENT.—The Otter vents when he comes to the surface of the water to breathe.

VENT-HOLE.—A hole leading into a holt above water at which an Otter may be winded by hounds or terriers.

VISIT.—A dog-Otter will often come down-stream or cross a watershed to visit a bitch, thus giving the chance of a long trail hunt.

WEDGING.—Another name for SPRAINTS.

WHIPPERS-IN.—The hunt officials, whether paid or voluntary, whose duty it is to see that hounds obey the orders of the Master.

WHO-WHOOP—The cheer announcing a kill.

WORRY.—When the dead Otter is thrown to the hounds after the trophies have been removed. Also when hounds are killing their quarry.

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